AMBROSIASTER

A Fourth Century Commentary on Romans

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Introduction

The author of this commentary on Romans and the other commentaries on Paul's letters is an anonymous author that scholars have given the name Ambrosiaster, which means "star of Ambrose." The name "Ambrosiaster" was given around the 17th century as a nod to the centuries long misunderstanding that Ambrose of Milan was the author of the commentaries on Paul's letters. He is also the author of another large work called Questions on the Old and New Testaments, which I have already translated and published[1].

Fifth century Church Father Augustine of Hippo thought a writer by the name Hilary wrote the commentaries. Scholars assume that Augustine was thinking this "Hilary" to be the great Hilary of Poitier (310-367AD). Augustine was not only aware of the commentaries by Ambrosiaster, but he even quotes from them in his own writings.

Jerome of Stridon was also aware of Ambrosiaster's works, especially the Questions on the Old and New Testaments. Jerome being familiar with the work, never attempts to mention the name of the author, probably because it was anonymous then. Jerome was not impressed with some of his interpretations either. He appears to have been annoyed by the fact that Ambrosiaster preferred the Biblical Old Latin manuscripts over the Greek manuscripts, considering that Jerome preferred the Greek for his Vulgate translation of the New Testament, therefore it probably struck a nerve with him. Jerome may have felt like Ambrosiaster was somewhat a rival of the favor of Pope Damasus as well.

Dom Germain Morin (1861–1946), who was a celebrated scholar of early Christian literature, and after a long study of this author Ambrosiaster and his period, has suggested the name of *Decimius Hilarianus Hilarius* as that of the author[2], which many scholars have embraced as an educated speculation.

As mentioned above, the authorship of the commentaries were thought to be Ambrose of Milan for centuries. The style of the commentaries is obviously not by Ambrose due to the literalness of the style and differences in interpretations of various parts of Scripture. As for the Questions on the Old and New Testaments, it was thought for a period to have been written by Augustine, but due to similar reasons, it differs in style from Augustine and has contrary interpretations on key Scripture passages and doctrinal differences.

One of the reasons why I chose to translate this commentary on Romans by Ambrosiaster is because I wanted to confirm for myself that the author of the Questions on the Old and New Testaments was the same as the one who wrote the commentaries. It did not take me long to realize that it was from the same author when I started this translation project. The style of writing is identical. And there are places throughout this commentary on Romans that is nearly word for word with sections found in the Questions on the Old and New Testaments. Alexander Souter, in his book called *A Study of Ambrosiaster*, demonstrated those striking similarities found in both sets of works. He shows how various interpretations match up, and he showed that the Scripture text used for both works were related to a family of Old Latin texts that preceded Jerome's Latin Vulgate.

Ambrosiaster appears to have written both works in Rome around the year 380AD. He also appears to have revised his own works over time because there are recensions of both works that are thought to be his own. I provided English translations of both recensions of the Questions on the Old and New Testaments in that work. This English translation of the commentary on Romans comes from the Latin text from Volume 17 of Jacques-Paul Migne's Patrologia Latina.

I added an appendix in the back of the book that compares comments from the commentary on Romans vs sections of the Questions on the Old and New Testaments on related topics and Scripture passages. Some are nearly word for word, and some are presented just to allow for comparison. Ambrosiaster quoted the Epistle of Romas 42 times in his Questions on the Old and New Testaments.

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1 Questions on the Old and New Testaments by Ambrosiaster: English Translation, translated by John Litteral, originally published in 2018, revised in 2026.

2 Alexander Souter, A Study of Ambrosiaster, Volume 7, Issue 4 of Texts and studies: Contributions to Biblical and patristic literature, Publisher Kraus Reprint, 1967, Original from the University of Virginia. (pg. 183)

PROLOGUE

In order to have fuller knowledge of things, their principles must first be sought; for then the explanation of the cause can more easily be set forth, if its origin is learned. For when we have shown the manner and logic by which the letter was given, what we say can appear true. It is therefore established that in the times of the apostles the Jews, because they were living under the Roman Empire, resided at Rome; and from among these, those who had come to believe handed down to the Romans that, while professing Christ, they should observe the Law. But the Romans, having heard the report of Christ's miracles, were ready to believe, as men of sound judgment; and not without reason were they called wise, for having been wrongly led at first, they were quickly corrected and remained firm in that course.

Therefore certain people from among the Jews, as can be understood, who believed in Christ, did not accept that God is from God, thinking Him opposed to the one God. For this reason he says they did not receive the spiritual grace of God, and therefore lacked confirmation. These are the ones who also had unsettled the Galatians, so that they turned away from the tradition of the apostles; and this is why the Apostle is angry with them, because though they had been well taught, they were easily led astray. But he ought not to have been angry with the Romans; rather, he should praise their faith, because, seeing no remarkable signs of virtues and none of the apostles, they had nevertheless embraced faith in Christ, even though according to Jewish custom, more in words than in understanding; for the mystery of the cross of Christ had not been explained to them. Therefore, when certain people arrived who believed correctly, questions arose about eating meat and not eating meat, and whether the hope that is in Christ was sufficient, or whether the Law also had to be observed.

Therefore he writes to the Romans in four ways, reasoning from the beginning about the human race in a physical manner; for they are the head of all the nations, so that in them the others and all the Gentiles may learn. The first way is that in which he shows what he is, and what he has been, and whose he is, and by this he also strikes at heresies. The second way is that in which he proves that by the rule of nature they did not subject themselves to the one God, and what shameful and base things they did to one another, and for this they were despised by God; so that believers may rejoice. The third way is that they spurned the Law that was given; therefore he sets the Jews before the Greeks. The fourth way is that he teaches that the Jews have strayed from the Law and the promise of God concerning Christ, and have been made like the Gentiles; so that both alike need the mercy of God, hoping for salvation not through the Law, but through faith in Christ Jesus.

Therefore it is from here that, with every effort, he strives to remove them from the Law; because “the Law and the prophets were until John” (Luke 16:16); and to establish them solely in faith in Christ, and, as if against the Law, he claims the Gospel, not destroying the Law, but preferring Christianity. For he asserts that Christ was promised in such a way that, once He was preached, the Law would cease, not entirely, because a shortening of the Law has taken place, which would give salvation in a concise form; for many things were handed down to the ancients on account of the hardness of their hearts, so as to be a burden, which the mercy of God has shortened through Christ by granting forgiveness of past sins. He is therefore ungrateful to the mercy of God who wishes to remain under the Law; for Moses had said: “Therefore in fear you shall act for the sons of Israel” (Lev. 15:31); so that wherever they turned, they would have the Law, and therefore never be entirely without anxiety. Therefore, in order to teach that in Christ,

apart from the Law, hope of life and salvation is to be placed, and to show that the Lord Himself is over all, he begins therefore:

Chapter 1

<u>Romans 1:1a</u> ***Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus.***

Among our ancestors names were assigned with a reason, as Isaac was named because of laughter, and Jacob because of the heel; so this man too was called Saul on account of restlessness. But after he believed, he calls himself Paul instead of Saul, that is, changed. And since Saul, according to the sense mentioned above, is interpreted as restlessness or temptation, when he came to faith in Christ, he calls himself Paul, that is, as if from a tempter he had become one who is at rest, humble, or small; for our faith is peace. For previously he brought temptations upon the servants of God out of the restlessness of Judaism, but afterwards he himself suffered temptations because of the hope which earlier, out of love for Judaism, he had denied.

By declaring himself *a servant of Christ Jesus*, Paul shows that he is freed from the Law. And therefore he put both, that is, "Jesus Christ," so that he might mark the person of both God and man: because in both He is Lord, just as the apostle Peter bears witness, saying: "This is," he says, "the Lord of all." (Acts 10:36) Since therefore He is both Lord and God, as David says: "For the Lord Himself is God" (Ps. 99:3); which heresies deny. For to Marcion, out of hatred for the Law, it seems right to deny Christ and His body, and to confess Jesus; but to the Jews and to Photinus, because of their zeal for the Law, to deny that Jesus is God. For whenever he says either "Jesus" or "Christ," he sometimes signifies God, sometimes man, as in this passage among others: "And one," he says, "Lord Jesus, through whom are all things" (1 Cor. 8:6), which certainly refers to the Son of God, inasmuch as

He is God. And in another place: “But Jesus,” he says, “advanced in age and wisdom” (Luke 2:52), which certainly belongs to man.

Romans 1:1b ***Called as an apostle.***

Because of this he has come to know God and confesses Him, having been made a fitting servant; he shows that he has been elevated by saying: “Called as an apostle,” that is, sent by the Lord to conduct His affairs. By this Paul shows that he has favor with God, since he serves not the Law but Christ; for the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath (Matt. 12:8).

Romans 1:1c ***Set apart for the Gospel of God.***

The Gospel of God is the good news of God, by which sinners are called to forgiveness. But the Apostle, since in Judaism he held the position of teacher, as a Pharisee, therefore says that he has been set apart from the preaching of Judaism for the Gospel of God, so that, turning away from the Law, he might proclaim Christ, who, in what the Law could not do, would justify those who believe in him. Yet he is not against the Law, but for the Law; for it itself foretells this, as the prophet Isaiah says: “There shall come from Zion one who will rescue and turn away captivity from Jacob; and this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” (Isa. 59:20–21)

Therefore, if the Law of God was given through Moses, and the preaching is of the new Law of God, what is it that makes the difference, so that one can say he has been transferred from the Law which God gave into the Gospel of God? It is like this, as when someone moves from the second rank to the first, and from what is good to what is better. For the Law was given by God for the correction of conduct; but the Gospel of God is that through

which the mystery of God is revealed, which lay hidden for ages in God: that mystery is Christ. To this all who are invited receive a double gift; for they receive the remission of sins, and become children of God, so that they can no longer die the second death. Therefore it is that the Lord says in the Gospel: This is, he says, eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (Jn. 17:3).

Romans 1:2a ***What He had previously promised.***

In order to prove that the hope of faith is firm and complete in Christ, Paul first says that His Gospel was previously promised by God; and, to show from this that He is a suitable guarantor of life, he points out that, before He came, testimony was given to Him, with Peter the Apostle bearing similar witness: "For there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Romans 1:2b ***Through his prophets.***

In order to make it more evident that the coming of Christ would be saving, Paul also pointed out the persons through whom he sealed the promise, so that from them it might be seen how true and magnificent the promise is. For no one announces a worthless thing with great heralds.

Romans 1:2c ***In the Holy Scriptures.***

Paul added this to complete his true declaration, so that he might inspire greater confidence in believers and commend the Law; for the Scriptures are holy, and they condemn vices; and there is contained therein the mystery of the one God and of the

incarnation of the Son of God for human salvation, with the signs of wonders as witnesses.

Romans 1:3a ***Concerning His Son.***

It was fitting that, since God was promising His own Son to the world, He should promise Him through distinguished men, so that from them it might be known how mighty He was who was being proclaimed, so that He might insert in the Holy Scriptures that His coming was to take place, and so that what was proclaimed by the saints in the Scriptures could not appear false.

Romans 1:3b ***Who was made for him from the seed of David according to the flesh.***

He, who was the Son of God according to the Holy Spirit, that is, according to God (for God is spirit, and is without doubt holy), says that he was made according to the flesh the Son of God from the seed of David, according to that: "And the Word was made flesh" (Jn. 1:14); so that Christ Jesus may now be one Son of God and of man, so that just as he is true God, he might also be true man; but he will not be true unless he is of flesh and soul, so that he may be perfect. For he, who from eternity was the Son of God, was unknown to the creature; but when he willed to be revealed for human salvation, he had to become visible and corporeal; because he also willed to be known by his power, and to cleanse man from sins in the flesh, with death overcome. And therefore he is made from the seed of David, so that just as he was born as king from God before the ages, so also according to the flesh he might receive royal origin from a king, made by the work of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin, that is, born; so that, with reverence reserved for him, he might from this be known as more than man; because he differed from the nativity under human law, just as it

had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb" (Isa. 7:14), so that when what was new should appear and worthy of praise, a certain providence of God concerning the visitation of the human race to come might be recognized.

<u>Romans 1:4</u> ***Who was predestined to be the Son of God in power according to the spirit of sanctification by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.***

By saying "Son of God," Paul signified the Father as God; but by adding "spirit of sanctification," he showed the mystery of the Trinity. Therefore, this one who was incarnate had his true nature hidden; then he was predestined, according to the spirit of sanctification in power, to be revealed as the Son of God when he rose from the dead, as it is written in the eighty-fourth Psalm: "Truth has sprung out of the earth" (Ps. 84:12). For all uncertainty and doubt were trampled down and crushed by his resurrection; indeed, while he was still on the cross, the centurion, seeing the mighty works, confessed him to be the Son of God (Matt. 27:54). For even the disciples doubted at his death, as Cleopas said in Emmaus: "We were hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). And the Lord himself says: "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he" (Jn. 8:28); and again: "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to myself" (Jn. 12:32), that is, then I shall be known as the Lord of all. Moreover, he did not say "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," but "by the resurrection of the dead," because the resurrection of Christ grants a universal resurrection. For this seems the greater power and victory in Christ: that, dead, he should act by the same power with which he had acted while living. By doing this he showed that he had mocked death, in order to redeem us; and for this reason he calls him our Lord.

Romans 1:5 ***Through whom we have received grace and apostleship, to bring about obedience to the faith among all nations for his name.***

After the resurrection, the Son of God was revealed in power, gave grace, justified sinners, and appointed apostles, of whom Paul here calls himself a companion; so that apostleship together with grace might be a gift of God, not like the apostles of the Jews. From God the Father, therefore, through Christ the Lord, they received this authority, so that in the place of the Lord, by miracles, they might make the Lord's teaching acceptable; so that the power which the faithless Jews were jealous of in the Savior, seeing this admired by the crowds in his servants, they might be tormented all the more fiercely. For power is the witness of doctrine, so that, because what is preached is incredible to the world, by deeds it might become believable. He therefore calls the apostles "those who are sent," that they might preach faith to all nations, that they might obey and be saved; so that the gift of God might be seen as granted not now to the Jews alone, but also to all nations: and that this is the will of God, that in Christ and through Christ he may have mercy on all, with his vicars preaching, that is: For his name; as he says elsewhere: For whom we act as ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20).

Romans 1:6 ***Among whom you also are called to belong to Jesus Christ.***

That is, as we carry out our mission among all the nations for the name of Jesus Christ, you too are among them and called; because the gift of God has been sent to all, so that when they hear that they are called among the others, they may know that they ought not to live under the Law, since the other nations have received the law of Christ without the law of Moses.

Romans 1:7a ***To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.***

Although Paul writes to the Romans, he indicates that he is writing to those who are in the love of God. Who are these, if not those who think rightly about the Son of God? These are the saints, and they are called so; for those who act under the Law misunderstand Christ: and they do injury to God the Father when they doubt whether in Christ there is the perfect hope of salvation. Therefore they are not saints, nor are they called.

Romans 1:7b ***Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

Paul says that grace and peace belong to those who believe rightly. It is grace, because they have been absolved from sins; it is peace, because, having been enemies, they have been reconciled to the Creator, as the Lord says: Into whatever house you enter and they receive you, say: Peace to this house (Luke 10:5). And, in order to teach that without Christ there is no peace and no hope, he added that grace and peace are not only from God the Father, but also from Christ Jesus. He calls God "our Father" because of origin, since all things are from Him; but Christ "Lord," because, redeemed by His blood, we have been made children of God.

Romans 1:8 ***First of all, I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.***

With the preface concluded, Paul declares that before anything else his joy consists in this, as the Apostle of the Gentiles, that while the Romans were ruling the world, they submitted

themselves to the Christian faith, which seems lowly and foolish to the wise of this age. Therefore, although there were many things in the Romans that could cause him joy (for they were notable in learning and eager for good works, more zealous in doing well than in speaking, which is not far from divine religion), yet he says that this is the first thing in which he rejoices: that their faith was running forth in every place. And although it was not yet in full accord with the rule of truth handed down by its authors, still, because they had begun to venerate what comes from the one God, raising the name of Christ, he rejoices, knowing that they are able to make progress. By this he also shows his love toward them, since he shares in joy over the good they have begun and urges them on toward further growth.

He therefore says that he gives thanks only to his God, because they did not yet fully belong to him; for from Him is every fatherhood (Eph. 3:15). But since every ordering of our salvation is indeed from God, yet through Christ, not through the Law nor through any prophet, he says that he gives thanks to God, but through Christ, because the fame of their faith had been an advancement for many; so that he might attribute this very fact to God's providence through Christ. For either those who had believed rejoiced, being strengthened; or the others, because they saw their leaders converted; or at least those who had not believed could be brought to faith by their example. For one in a lower position easily does what he sees the one above him doing.

Romans 1:9a ***For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I always make mention of you in my prayers.***

In order to mention love, Paul calls upon God as witness, whom he serves and to whom he also offers prayer on their behalf, serving not in the Law but in the Gospel of His Son; that is, not in

what Moses the servant delivered, but in what the beloved Son taught. For as far as the servant is from the master, so far is the Gospel from the Law: not because the Law is evil, but because the Gospel is better. Therefore he serves God in the Gospel of His Son, so as to show that it is God's will that people believe in Christ.

Romans 1:9b ***Whom do I also serve.***

How? In my spirit, Paul says, not in man-made circumcision, nor in new moons, and the sabbath, and distinctions of foods; but in spirit, that is, in the mind. Since God is spirit, He ought rather to be served in spirit or in soul; for whoever serves Him in soul, serves Him by faith. This also the Lord said to the Samaritan woman, who thought that God wished to be worshiped on the mountain, saying: The hour comes, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeks such as those who will worship Him. God is spirit (Jn. 4:23–24). Therefore, those who worship must worship in spirit and in truth; and it is not the place that praises prayer, but the devout soul. This is to worship in truth in spirit the God who is spirit, and Christ, the one from whom are all things, and the one through whom are all things (1 Cor. 8:6). These worshipers the Father seeks. He therefore asks that they be mindful of him in their prayers, so that he may sow love in them; for he creates in them the desire for himself. For who would not love him whom he hears is mindful of him? For if from those who had not been sent they had gladly received teaching under the name of Christ, with impure words; how much more would they desire to hear from him whom they knew to be an apostle, and whose words were accompanied by power!

Romans 1:10 ***Praying that somehow at last I may have a successful journey to come to you, in accordance with the will of God.***

Paul shows the sense of his prayer for them; for he says that he asks God that he might come to the city for their improvement, with the will of God, whose gift he proclaims. For progress is present only if what must be done is done with the will of God. He therefore prays that for whatever reason an opportunity might now be given for him to come to the city, because he was occupied with preaching to others; therefore he considers it a successful journey if he comes, God willing, because the will of God is provident. A successful journey, then, is to undergo the labor of travel not in vain. This he asks that God may fulfill, by calling them to His grace. He speaks with eagerness of soul; for he desires them, knowing that it benefits both them and himself, as he says elsewhere: What is our joy and crown? Is it not you in the presence of the Lord's coming? (1 Thess. 2:19). For the Apostle's fruit is richer if he gains many. Likewise, there is greater joy if the powerful of this world are converted to God, because the more tough the enemies are, the more necessary they are when reconciled. Therefore an occasion was given to his will in such a way that he was compelled to appeal to Caesar and was sent for another reason to the city of Rome, by God's will, so that he might fulfill the purpose of his will. Finally, when he was in shipwreck, the Lord stood by him, saying: Do not be afraid, Paul; for as you have borne witness about me in Jerusalem, so you must also in Rome (Acts 27:24).

Romans 1:11 ***For I desire to see you, that I may impart to you spiritual grace for the strengthening of you.***

This confirmation requires three persons: God who gives assent, the Apostle who administers, and the people who receive. Now

therefore Paul shows the will of his desire, what his wish concerning them was; for when he says, that I may impart to you spiritual grace, he indicates that they had acquired a carnal understanding; because under the name of Christ they had not achieved to what Christ had taught, but to those things that had been handed down by the Jews. But he himself wishes to come quickly, so that he may draw them away from this tradition and deliver to them the spiritual gift, that he may win them for God, making them sharers of spiritual grace, so that in their profession and faith they may be perfect.

From this it is understood that he did not previously praise their faith, but rather their readiness and devotion toward Christ; for, although they professed themselves to be Christians, they were living straightforwardly under the Law, just as it had been handed down to them. For the mercy of God was given for this very purpose, that the Law should come to an end, as I have often said already; because God, considering human weakness, resolved to save the human race by adding faith alone to the natural law.

What is the reason, then, that although he corrects them by his writings and draws them away from a carnal understanding, he still says his presence is necessary so that he might minister spiritual grace to them, when what he writes is itself spiritual? Unless it is for this reason, that words, when spoken, are often twisted to mean something else, as the heretics do? Therefore he longs to be present, so that he may hand on the doctrine of the Gospel with the same sense in which he writes, lest under the authority of his letters error should not be removed but rather strengthened. For when present he can persuade by his power what he could not persuade by words, so that, when he is with them, they may make greater progress.

Romans 1:12 ***That is, to be mutually comforted among you by that which is shared between us, your faith and mine.***

Paul says he is comforted with them if they grasp spiritual things; for although he rejoices in their faith, he is nevertheless pained because they were not receiving the true faith. The Apostle was of such a disposition that he grieved over the faults of others as if they were his own. And therefore, he says, let us be comforted by one and the same faith, so that there may be one comfort if they are made to be of one faith in Christ; in order that the ministry of spiritual grace, through the Apostle's preaching of the Gospel, might produce this effect.

Romans 1:13a ***I do not think, however, that you are unaware, brothers, that I have often planned to come to you, and have been prevented up to now.***

Paul shows his intention and desire, which he does not doubt they know through those brothers who, from Jerusalem or the neighboring cities, came to Rome for the sake of their religion, like Aquila and Priscilla, who made his desire known to the Romans. For since he often wished to come and was prevented, it came about that he wrote the letter, so that, being held for a long time in harmful practice, they would not be easily corrected. And he calls them brothers not only because they had been reborn, but also because among them there were, though few, those who thought rightly. Therefore he said: "Called to be saints" (Rom. 1:7). But what does "called to be saints" mean? For if they are already saints, how are they called in order to be sanctified? But this belongs to God's foreknowledge, because those whom God knows will be saints, are already saints in his sight, and remain called.

Yet he says he was forbidden until the time the letter was written, by God of course, who, knowing that they were still unprepared, directed the Apostle to other cities that were already capable of receiving the truth; even though they acted under the name of the Savior, they were kept back by carnal vices, so that they were not yet worthy to learn spiritual things. Indeed, when they wished at one time to go into Bithynia, Paul and Silas were prevented by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:7): why, if not because He knew that the right disposition was still lacking? But at Corinth the Apostle is warned, with the Lord saying: "Speak, do not be silent; for I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:9–10). Therefore he does not say he was forbidden without reason, but he both distinguished the causes of the delays and urged them to prepare themselves; so that, hearing that spiritual grace was going to be ministered to them, they might make themselves worthy to receive it, abstaining from carnal vices.

Romans 1:13b ***That I may have some fruit among you also, just as among the other nations.***

Paul declares that he is eager to come to them for the common benefit, so that they too may obtain the salvation of spiritual grace, having their profession of faith confirmed; so that he may have fruit with God from his ministry, through which he urges them toward true faith by the example of the other nations: for a person becomes more ready for the matter entrusted to him if he sees that many agree with it.

Romans 1:14 ***I am a debtor to Greeks and barbarians, to the wise and the foolish.***

Paul calls himself a debtor to those whom he mentions, because he was sent for this purpose, to preach to all; by this he also

signifies that all are debtors, for to confess God the Creator, from whom are all things and through whom are all things, is both a due honor and the salvation of the one who confesses. By "Greeks" he means the Gentiles, but those who are called Romans either by birth or by adoption; by "barbarians" he means those who are not Romans, whose race is opposed, and they are Gentiles. He calls "wise" those who, instructed in worldly reasoning, are called wise in this age, whether they are observers of the stars, or devoted to measurements, or numbers, or the art of grammar, rhetoric, or music. To all these he shows that none of these things profits, nor are they truly wise, unless they believe in Christ. He calls "fools" those who, following simplicity, are unskilled in these matters. To all of these he bears witness that he has been sent to preach. But he is silent about the Jews, because he is the teacher of the Gentiles. And therefore he declares himself a debtor, because he has received doctrine for this purpose, that he might hand it on; and when he hands it on, he gains.

Romans 1:15 ***Therefore, as far as it depends on me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome.***

Although Paul says that he has been sent to proclaim it to all the nations, he nevertheless declares himself ready to deliver to the Romans the Gospel of the grace of God, among whom is the head and seat of the Roman Empire. For it relates to the use or rest of the limbs if the head is not restless. Therefore he desires the peace of the Romans, so that Satan may not boost himself too much, and that he may have richer fruits from his work.

Romans 1:16a ***For I am not ashamed of the Gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes.***

With this statement he touches those from whom they had received a faith that was not correct, yet the power of the apostles' teaching praised it; so that, because what was being preached seemed incredible, the signs and wonders worked by the apostles might serve as testimony, that there should be no doubting of the things spoken by those in whom such power resided (for no one doubts that words yield to power, and therefore, since no miracles were seen in them, their preaching was without the power of God); and therefore he says that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of God, but that they are ashamed, because what they had handed down came under reproach, was supported by no testimony anywhere, and was at odds with apostolic doctrine. It is therefore the power of God that calls to faith and grants salvation to every believer, while it forgives sins and justifies; so that the one marked with the mystery of the cross cannot be held by the second death. For the preaching of the cross of Christ is proof that death has been conquered, as the apostle John says: "For this purpose the Son of God came, that he might destroy the works of the Devil" (1 Jn. 3:9), so that everyone who believes is not held by death, because he bears the sign that death has been overcome.

Romans 1:16b ***First to the Jew, and to the Greek.***

That is, to the one who is of the race of Abraham, and to the one who is of the nations; for in Greek it means a gentile, but in Jew it means one who is of the race of Abraham. For they began to be called Jews from the time of Judas Maccabeus, who, in the time of disaster, stood firm against the sacrileges of the nations, and with trust in God gathered the people and defended his own race. He was, likewise, of the sons of Aaron. Although therefore he gives precedence to the Jew because of the Fathers, he likewise says that he too needs the gift of the Gospel of Christ. If therefore

even the Jew is not justified except through faith in Christ Jesus, what is the point of being under the Law?

<u>Romans 1:17a</u> ***For the righteousness of God is revealed in it from faith to faith.***

Paul says this because in the one who believes, whether he is a Jew or a Greek, the righteousness of God is revealed (Hab. 2:4). He calls it *the righteousness of God* because He freely justifies the ungodly through faith, without the works of the Law, as he says elsewhere: "That I may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the Law, but that which is through faith" (Philip. 3:9). The righteousness that is from God in faith, this very righteousness he says is revealed in the Gospel, while He grants to a person the faith by which he may be justified. For the truth and righteousness of God are shown in him, as he believes and confesses: it is the righteousness of God, because what He promised, He has given. Therefore, by believing that he has obtained what God had promised through His prophets, he proves that God is just and is a witness to His righteousness.

From faith to faith. What else does "from faith to faith" mean, except that there is the faith of God in what He has promised about Himself, and the faith of man, who believes the One who promises, so that from the faith of God who promises to the faith of the man who believes, the righteousness of God may be revealed? For in the believer, God appears righteous; but in the one who does not believe, He seems unrighteous, for he denies that God is truthful, who does not believe that God has given what He promised. This is spoken against the Jews, who deny that this is the Christ whom God has promised.

<u>Romans 1:17b</u> ***As it is written: "But the righteous man lives by faith"*** (Hab. 2:4).

Therefore Paul turns to the example of the prophet Habakkuk, so that he may show that it was formerly revealed that the righteous man lives by faith, not by the Law; that is, that a man is not justified before God through the Law, but through faith. For the life that is from faith is not this present life, but the future one; because the righteous man lives by faith, but before God.

<u>Romans 1:18</u> ***For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those men who hold down the truth of God in unrighteousness.***

For just as in the one who believes the righteousness of God is revealed, as I mentioned above, so also in the one who does not believe ungodliness and injustice are revealed. From the very structure of heaven God appears to be angry with them; for this is why He fashioned such beautiful stars, so that from them it might be recognized how great and how wonderful their creator is, and that He alone should be worshiped. Therefore it is written in the Psalm: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims the work of his hands (Ps. 18:2). By the natural law, therefore, the human race is made guilty; for they could have grasped, through the law of nature and the witness of the world's structure, that God alone, the author, is to be loved, which Moses handed down in writing (Deut. 6:5): but they became godless by not worshiping the Creator, and injustice appears in them, since, seeing, they turn away from the truth, not acknowledging one God.

<u>Romans 1:19a</u> ***For what is known of God is revealed in them.***

The knowledge of God is made clear from the fabric of the world; for in order that God, who is by nature invisible, might also be known through visible things, a work was made by Him which, by its visibility, would reveal its maker, so that through what is certain yet uncertain He might be known; and from this, that which is impossible for all others, He would be believed to be the God of all, who made this work.

Romans 1:19b ***For God revealed Himself to them;***

That is, He accomplished a work through which He can be recognized by faith.

Romans 1:20a ***For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood through the things that have been made.***

It is the same meaning that he repeats, so that he may teach more clearly that, since the power and majesty of God cannot be seen by the eyes of creatures in themselves, they are seen, understood, through the work of the world. By this means, therefore, he makes those who lived without the law, both of nature and of Moses, guilty; for by the habit of sinning they have buried the law of nature and forgotten its memory, and they were unwilling to receive the law that had been given for improvement, so that they might become accountable to condemnation in a double way.

Romans 1:20b ***His eternal power and divinity also, so that they are without excuse.***

In order that wickedness might in no way be able to be excused, he added also that the power of God and his eternal divinity are

known by human beings, and that they have been dulled by a certain lethargy when it comes to honoring God, whose existence and activity for their benefit they did not ignore; for it is beyond doubt that he himself has decreed the things that are produced for human use as the year unfolds. His eternal power, therefore, is Christ, through whom he established things that did not exist, and they remain in him. And even if his person has not long been recognized, his works are nevertheless clear: his divinity, moreover, because in the work decreed by him the elements of created things endure.

So that they are without excuse. For in many ways one who is found guilty cannot be excused.

Romans 1:21a ***For although they had known God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor give thanks.***

To such a degree did they not ignore Him that they confessed there is one principle from which all things have received their beginning, things heavenly, earthly, and hellish, and that this one is He who has ordained for all things their properties and offices according to nature; and knowing this, they did not give thanks. Paul speaks of those who came before, in order to correct those present and those to come.

Romans 1:21b ***But they vanished in their own thoughts.***

They vanished; for seeing the world adorned in wondrous fashion, arranged by him whom they had recognized as its Maker, they pretended not to know him.

Romans 1:21c ***And their foolish heart was darkened.***

The mist of error covered their heart, because, although they ought to have honored the Creator all the more from the beautiful things He made, they became dull, abandoning Him and saying that these visible things alone served for worship.

> **<u>Romans 1:22</u>** ***A mist of error covered their heart, because when, from the beautiful things he had made, they ought to have honored the Creator all the more, they became dull, and, leaving him, claimed that these things alone, which are seen, were sufficient for their worship.***

For in claiming to be wise, they became fools. For they consider themselves wise because they think they have investigated physical causes, examining the courses of the stars and the qualities of the elements, yet they scorn the Lord of these things; therefore they are fools. For if these things are worthy of praise, how much more the Creator of them! Yet, having suffered shame, they make a wretched excuse for having neglected God, saying that through these things they can go to God, just as one reaches the king through his companions. Come now, is anyone so senseless, or so forgetful of his own salvation, that he gives the honor due to the king to a companion? For in such a matter, if any are even found to attempt it, they are rightly condemned as guilty of treason against majesty. And these men do not think themselves guilty, who bestow the honor of God's name upon a creature, and, abandoning the Lord, worship their fellow-servants, as though something greater were reserved for God. For it is precisely for this reason that one approaches a king through tribunes or companions: because the king is merely a man, and does not know to whom he ought to entrust the commonwealth. But with God, whom nothing at all escapes (for He knows the wages of all), there is no need of an advocate to gain His favor, but of a devout mind.

For wherever such a person has spoken to Him, He will answer him.

Romans 1:23a ***And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of corruptible man.***

Therefore their heart was darkened, so that the majesty of the invisible God, whom they had recognized from these works, they transformed not into men, but, what is worse, and an inexcusable crime, into the likeness of men; so that the form of corruptible man is called God by them, that is, the image of man: so that those whom they do not dare to honor with this name while alive, they receive the images of the dead into the glory of God. What dullness, what foolishness, to call such men wise unto their own condemnation, among whom an image has more power than truth, and the dead are preferred to the living! For, turning away from the living God, they favor the dead, among whose number they themselves are, as it is written in the wisdom of Solomon: A mortal fashions a dead thing with wicked hands (Wis. 15:27).

Romans 1:23b ***And of birds, and of four-footed animals, and of serpents.***

Over these subjected things he heaped up punishment of dullness, so that they might be beyond foolishness and vanity of that kind. For in this way they diminished the majesty and glory of God, that they gave honor of the likeness of God to those things which are the least and smallest; for the first Babylonians called God the image of Bel, a certain man once dead, who is said to have ruled over them. They also worshipped a serpent, a dragon, which Daniel, the man of God, killed (Dan. 14:26), whose likeness they have. But the Egyptians worshipped a four-footed animal, which

they called Apis, in the likeness of a cow; an evil that Jeroboam imitated (2 Kings 12:28), setting up cows in Samaria, for the Jews to sacrifice to; and birds, because the pagans held the raven as sacred. Yet of all these things that I have mentioned, the Egyptians worshipped images, and others which there is now no need to speak of. These things were done by those who considered themselves wise in the world; for, acknowledging the invisible God, yet not honoring him by doing these things, they could not be wise even in those things which are visible. For it is difficult that one wise in greater things should not be wise in lesser things.

Romans 1:24 ***For this reason God handed them over to the desires of their hearts, to impurity, so that they might treat their bodies with dishonor among themselves.***

For, Paul says, because they deified the inventions and likenesses of things to the injury of God their Creator, they were handed over to be mocked; and they were handed over not so that they would do what they did not want, but so that they would carry out what they desired. And here is the goodness of God; for although it would have been fitting to subject them so that they would do what they did not want and be tormented, because even a good thing, if done against the will, is bitter and evil. But these, turning away from God, were handed over to the Devil. Now to hand over is to permit, not to incite or to send in; so that the things they had perceived in their desires, aided by the Devil, they might carry out in action: for they could not have such a good thought.

Therefore they are given over to uncleanness, so that they may inflict *dishonor* upon *their bodies* within *themselves*. When he recalls past events, he also points to the evils of the present time; for they are still handed over now, so that they may subject their bodies to disgrace. For from that origin even to the present there are people who are said to dishonor their bodies among one

another. When the soul's thought is criminal, the bodies are said to be dishonored; why else, if not because the stain on the body is a sign of the soul's sin? For when the body is defiled, no one doubts that the sin belongs to the soul.

Romans 1:25 ***They have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and have worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.***

They have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, that is, they have given the name of God, who is true, to those who are not gods. For in the case of stones and wood, or other metals, taking away what they are, they give to them what they are not, and this is to change what is true into what is false. For they are no longer called stone or wood, but God: this is to serve the creature rather than the Creator. For they do not deny God, but they serve the creature: by this they are not excused, but rather more strongly accused; because, though they know, they do not honor God.

Who is blessed forever. Amen; that is, true. But God says: blessed forever; because God remains; whereas to the gods of the nations He grants honor for a time of wickedness; therefore it is not true. But in God truth abides. He assigns this blessing in another place to the Son of God, saying among other things: And from whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen (Rom. 9:5). Either both statements refer to Christ; or He said the same of the Son as of the Father.

Romans 1:26 ***Therefore God handed them over to shameful passions. For their women exchanged natural use for that use which is against nature.***

This bears witness that these things came upon the human race from an angry God on account of idolatry, so that a woman, with disgraceful desire, would seek another woman for use. Some interpret this differently, not perceiving the force of the statement. For what is it to exchange natural use for that use which is against nature, if not, with the granted use taken away, to use things otherwise, so that one and the same part of each person's body, in relation to the opposite sex, offers itself for use in a way different from that which has been granted? For if it is that part of the body which they suppose, how did they alter the use of nature, since they do not have such a use given by nature? Above Paul had already said that they were given up to uncleanness, yet he had not shown the specific quality of the deed of uncleanness itself, which he now sets forth.

Romans 1:27a ***Similarly, the males too, abandoning the natural use of the female, burned in their desires for one another, males with males committing indecency.***

Now Paul has made clear how what he said above about women ought to be understood. When he then added, "Similarly the males," saying that they burned in desire for one another, he has openly shown the sin of the women. Indeed, he did not say about the men that they changed the natural use among themselves, because such a use has not been granted to this sex, but to females. And what is surprising about this, since even today such women are found, so that just as that was invented by men, so this too has been discovered by women? Indeed, women accuse one another among themselves, and men likewise; it is therefore clear that those who have already changed the truth of God into a lie have also changed natural use into that use by which they are dishonored, becoming guilty of the second death. Since Satan cannot give another law, for he has nothing, he turns what is

permitted and lawful into another order, so that when things are done differently than they were granted, they become sin.

Romans 1:27b ***And they receive within themselves, as the recompense for their wage which was fitting, the reward of their own error.***

Paul calls this recompense the contempt of God, that is, disgrace and defilement; for this is the primary cause of this sin. For what is worse, what more depraved than this sin? For as idolatry is a thoroughly destructive and most grave offense, so also its recompense is dreadful, and a most filthy suffering.

Romans 1:28 ***And just as they did not see fit to keep God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a corrupted mind, so that they might do the things that are not right.***

Because of the errors of idols they were handed over to shameful acts with one another, as has already been said. And since they considered these things to go unpunished, judging God to be unconcerned and therefore to be disregarded, it was added that, being ever more and more dulled, they became readier to commit all kinds of evil, so that, for deeds which they did not doubt displeased men, they believed God would not exact vengeance. Now he lists all the evils that were added to them, so that, therefore converted to natural understanding, they might realize that, with God angered, these things had come upon them.

Romans 1:29-30 Paul says, ***filled with all iniquity.*** Here he has spoken briefly, and then he adds the parts of iniquity: ***wickedness, fornication,*** he says, ***greed, baseness, full of envy, murders, strife, deceit, hatred, whisperers,***

slanderers, hateful to God, insolent, proud, arrogant, inventors of evil.

He called *hatred* the head of *iniquity*, and placed *fornication* and *greed* as its work. This fornication includes adultery as well; for if he had said "adultery," he would seem to have excused fornication, as in Roman laws: therefore he named what is less, so that what is greater could not be believed to go unpunished.

Then he added: *wickedness*, whose disposition produces envy and murders, strife and deceit. After this he added: hatred, which gives rise to whisperings and slanders; and since these things cannot fail to displease God, he says: *hateful to God*; and because they are not pleasing to men either, he calls them *proud, arrogant*, overbearing, *inventors*, that is, authors, *of evil*. Evil, therefore, is not always the same thing. But these people, having become imitators of their father the Devil, discovered the evil of idolatry, through which all vices in the world have been born, and the greatest ruin. For the Devil, whom Scripture testifies to have sinned from the beginning (1 Jn. 3:8), although he strives after tyrannical presumption, has not yet dared to declare openly: I am God. Indeed, among other things he said to the Lord: All these things have been handed over to me (Luke 4:6); he does not say: They are from me; or: They are mine. And in the book of Job he asks that power be given to him (Job 1:12). Therefore those are worse who attribute divinity not only to the elements, but also to mere inventions.

Romans 1:31 ***Disobedient to parents.***

To what disrespect they have come, that they do not even acknowledge their parents, from whom they received their origin at birth, nor rejoice that they were born; yet they despise those through whom they began to exist! This is to ***be without***

understanding, without love, yet without the love of God; for there was in them only the love of the flesh. These, knowing the justice of God through the law of nature (for they knew that these things displease God, but were unwilling to take them to heart: "For those who do such things are worthy of death"), have come to know the justice of God to such a degree that they do not deny that all these things they do deserve punishment and death. And not only those who do them, but also those who consent to those who do them. For consent is participation.

> **Romans 1:32** ***Who, though they had known the justice of God, did not understand that those who do such things are worthy of death; and not only do they commit them, but also consent to those who do them.***

All these evils are the body of sins, to whose power they have been made slaves, so that they commit deeds that deserve punishment. For the cause of these evils began among the Sodomites with an offense against God, as was said above, and it has stretched out its branches into almost every part of the world, announcing the wrath of God on account of idolatry, which is the first part of error and wickedness that He condemns first; so that when this has been corrected, the vices of morals may easily be set right as well. For when the seed of hatred has been removed, the fruits of wickedness will wither; for a tree does not bear fruit whose roots have been cut off. And for this reason Moses also (Gen. 19:24 and following) recalled the deeds of Sodom and Gomorrah and did not keep silent about their destruction, so that he might instill fear of this sin to be avoided. Therefore this vice and defilement of a dishonored life is not admitted by one who in his soul thinks upon God.

There are some who do not consider themselves guilty if they do not themselves do what is evil, yet agree with those who do it. To

agree, however, means this: when they could rebuke, they remain silent; or, when they hear such tales, they flatter. For the impure and hateful man, knowing that what he does is not unknown, and that he is not avoided in the least, but even held in honor, perhaps boasts of being such a person. Nor can he be put to shame in these things, when he sees that he is favored and indulged by those who are not like him; and therefore it comes about that they provide fuel for those men's sins. Therefore it is fitting that they should be considered guilty of an equal crime. There are again others who not only do evil, but also give their approval to those who do it, so that they not only commit such acts themselves, but also approve those who do them. Their wickedness is therefore twofold: for those who do evil yet oppose the doers are not so wicked; for though they know of the crimes, they do not defend them. But those are utterly corrupt who both do these things and approve those who do them, so that they do not fear God; rather, desiring that evils should increase, they therefore by no means punish them, so that they may persuade others that such things are not to be avoided.

Chapter 2

Romans 2:1 ***Therefore you are without excuse, O every man who judges. For in whatever matter you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you practice the very same things that you judge.***

Since he shows that the one who does wicked deeds, and the one who consents to those who do them, are deserving of death, lest perhaps someone here who does this, and does not approve of those who do it, might think they can excuse themselves, he teaches that such a person will be without excuse. For it is not just

that liberty be granted to him; because through hypocrisy he presents himself as not such a one, while he is found to be worse. For he deceives, so that while he ought to be punished, he appears worthy of honor.

Romans 2:2 ***Now we know that the judgment of God is according to truth upon those who do such things.***

That is, we do not ignore that God will judge these deeds in truth, since we ourselves pass judgment on them. For if they displease us, how much more do they displease God, who is more just and zealous for His work! Therefore, when he says that God will judge these things in truth, he instills fear; so that He whom these deceitful people call careless, this One may declare that He will judge the wicked according to truth, that is, most truly render to each according to his measure, and not spare them.

Romans 2:3 ***Do you think this, O man, you who pass judgment on those who do such things and yet do them yourself: that you will escape the judgment of God?***

That is, is it because you have been given the authority to judge evil and sexual sins, while you commit the same, and because there is no one who presently judges you, that you will escape the judgment of God? Certainly not; for if you have escaped God's judgment in this world, though all this authority and judgment is from Him, you will not escape it in the future. For God Himself will judge, with whom flattery and partiality cease. Or if anyone thinks it just that a person of this sort should be free from punishment, let him say so. But if it is just that he should not escape, let him believe that God will judge, so that what he judges to be just may be true and fulfilled, and he may acknowledge that God, the creator of the world, carefully and diligently demands

what His work deserves. For if He has made it and then neglects it, He is called a bad craftsman; because by neglecting it He shows that what He made is not good. But since it cannot be denied that He has made good things, for it is unworthy and improbable that the Good should have made evil, it must be said that He takes care of them; for it would be an insult and an accusation against Him if He were thought negligent of the good things He has made: especially since life itself is sustained by His command and providence through the ministry of the elements, as the Lord Himself says: "He makes His sun rise on the good and the evil, and sends rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). So then, does He who provides care not also act to preserve what He has made, so that He may reward those who love Him and condemn those who despise Him?

> **Romans 2:4** ***And do you despise the riches of His goodness, and His patience, and His long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God is meant to lead you to repentance?***

Paul says this so that you will not think you have already escaped, just because God's goodness allows you to go on sinning for a long time; nor should you consider His patience something to be despised, as though He does not care about human affairs. Rather, understand that He refrains from acting against you now because God's judgment is not promised for this life, but for the life to come, so that then you may regret not having believed that God is a judge: for when you are under punishment, without any benefit from your repentance, you will repent because you did not believe in God's judgment, which you then see to be true. For it is necessary that the one whom the long patience has not corrected should be more sharply chastised, indeed, tormented with everlasting punishments. He speaks with great severity, knowing

that a evil mind can scarcely be turned away from its vices except by fear.

> **<u>Romans 2:5-6</u>** ***But according to your hardness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his works.***

Hoping for exemption for his sins, the sinner not only remains hard, unchangeable, and ungovernable, but sins even more bitterly, feeling secure that there will be no future vengeance, having an unrepentant heart, not knowing that he is piling up wrath for himself for the day of wrath. For it is necessary that he who, during God's long patience, not only refused to improve himself but, adding to his contempt, increased his sins, should be punished with a harsher penalty and indeed be tormented with everlasting flames. The day of wrath is for sinners, on which they will be punished; therefore it is wrath for them, because they experience punishment on the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. For it will be revealed, that is, it will be recognized, what is now denied as future; and so, when that which is not believed to exist is shown, it is revealed. For it is shown to those who deny what is already clear to believers, so that they may confess, even against their will, *the righteous judgment of God, when he will render to each according to his works*. Will they not admit that these things are done justly, when they see the evils they have done to one another avenged?

> **<u>Romans 2:7</u>** ***To those who, in accordance with the patience of good works, seek glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life.***

For since the judgment of God has been proclaimed as just, he has also declared what it will be like for the good: he calls those so, who, knowing the patience of God, being extended partly for correction, partly for greater vengeance upon those who do not improve themselves, conduct themselves well, repenting of their former deeds, relying on the confidence of faith, lest by remaining here long they experience loss of the promised life. He will therefore give them glory and honor. And lest this might not seem very great in comparison with the present life, since even here some appear glorious and honored, he added: *And incorruption*; so that another sort of glory and another sort of honor might be understood, when incorruption will accompany them at the same time. For in the present life honor or glory is often lost; because both the one who gives and what he gives, and the one who receives, are corruptible. But on the day of God's judgment an incorruptible honor and glory will be given, so that they may be wholly eternal; for the very substance will be glorified by a certain transformation according to merits. Therefore they seek eternal life, who are not only of good profession, but also of good life.

Romans 2:8 ***But for those who are combative, who distrust the truth yet obey iniquity, there will be wrath and anger, tribulation and distress,***

That is, repeated distress. Distrusting the future judgment of God through Christ, and thereby despising His patience, they strive to nullify that judgment, though it is true and firm. *Yet they put their faith in iniquity*; for iniquity is to deny what God has foretold will come to pass. He therefore assigns three other things fitting to unbelief, saying: *Wrath and anger and distress*. For wrath is not for the one who judges, but for the one who is judged, when he is made guilty. God is said to be wrathful so that He may be believed to be about to avenge; for the nature of God is free from these

passions. And so that He may be believed not only to be wrathful but also to avenge, he adds: And anger; indignation is what, added on top of wrath, signifies that God will avenge His own outrage. Distresses, moreover, are those by which, constrained by the sentence, he will be afflicted in punishment.

Romans 2:9a ***Above every soul of a human being doing evil.***

In this work it signifies not only deeds, but also the profession of deceit. For he is speaking of the unbeliever; and therefore he said "above the soul," so that you may understand a spiritual punishment, not a bodily one; because the soul will be constrained by invisible punishments.

Romans 2:9b ***The Jews first, and the Greeks.***

He always puts the Jew first because of the birthright of the Fathers, so that he may either be crowned first or condemned; for, believing, he is more greatly honored on account of Abraham, but if he disbelieves, he must be treated more harshly, because he has rejected the gift promised to the Fathers.

Romans 2:10 ***But glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.***

Just as he set three punishments for unbelievers, so also for the faithful three magnificent things, so that they may have a double honor, as children of God; let there be glory for their transformation; and peace, because those who live well will be at rest in the future, disturbed by no turmoil; indeed, because every

person who refrains from what is opposed has peace with the judge.

Romans 2:11 ***For there is no respect of persons with God.***

For he shows that neither Jew nor Greek is despised by God, provided that he believes in Christ, but that the righteousness of faith is bestowed on both alike; and likewise that those who do not believe are equally guilty, because circumcision without faith is more harmful, and uncircumcision through faith is beneficial. Therefore he teaches that God is not a respecter of persons. For he does not follow the birthright of lineage so as to receive the unbelieving on account of their fathers, or to reject the believing because of the unworthiness of their parents; but he either rewards or condemns each person according to his own merit.

Romans 2:12a ***For whoever have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law.***

How can one sin without law, since we are all alike subject to the natural law? But he is speaking of the law of Moses, to which the Jews are bound when they do not believe; and likewise the Gentiles, but long ago, because they refused to join themselves to it. Therefore the unbelieving Gentiles become guilty in a twofold way: because they neither consented to the law given through Moses nor received the grace of Christ; therefore it is fitting that they should perish. Therefore, just as whoever sins without the law will perish, so also whoever without the law has kept the law will be justified. For one who naturally keeps righteousness is a guardian of the law. For if the law is not laid down for the righteous (1 Tim. 1:9), but for the unrighteous, then whoever does not sin is a friend of the law. This person lacks only faith, by which he may be made perfect; for it will be of no benefit to him before

God to abstain from what is contrary, unless he has received faith in God, so that he may be righteous in both respects; because that is the righteousness of time, but this is of eternity.

<u>Romans 2:12b</u> ***And whoever have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law.***

For the Jews have the Law, in which salvation is promised to them; not believing, or not accepting the promise, they will be judged by the Law under which they lived. For with that very Law accusing them, they will pay the penalties: indeed, the case of the Jews is in a way more serious in their own regard than that of the nations. For just as believers are preferred, so also when they lack faith, they are found worse: for one who has lost what he had is more displeasing than one who could not obtain what he did not hope for. This man did not enter the royal palace; that one was cast out.

<u>Romans 2:13</u> ***For it is not the hearers of the Law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.***

Paul says this because those are not righteous who merely hear the Law, but those who believe in Christ, whom that same Law promised; and this is what it is to do the Law. But no one fulfills the Law who does not believe the Law, since he does not accept the one to whom the Law bears witness. Yet someone who does not appear to be in the Law, because he is uncircumcised in the flesh, but believes in Christ, is said to have fulfilled the Law. And the one who says that he is in the Law, that is, the Jew, becomes a hearer of the Law, not a doer, because he does not believe in Christ written of in the Law, just as Philip said to Nathanael: “We have found Jesus, the one of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote” (Jn. 1:45).

Romans 2:14 ***For when the Gentiles, who do not have the Law, by nature do the things that belong to the Law.***

Elsewhere he calls the Gentiles Christians: For I say to you Gentiles (Col. 2:16); because the uncircumcised observe neither new moons, nor the sabbath, nor the law concerning foods, and under the guidance of nature believe in God and in Christ, that is, in the Father and the Son; for this is to keep the Law, to acknowledge the God of the Law. For the first part of wisdom is this: to fear God the Father, from whom are all things; and the Lord Jesus His Son, through whom are all things. Therefore nature itself, by its own judgment, recognizes its Creator, not through the Law, but through the reasoning of nature; for the work discerns the craftsman in itself.

Romans 2:15a ***Although they do not have the Law, they are a law unto themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts.***

The meaning is the same: because, while they believe under the guidance of nature, they show the work of the law not through the letter, but through conscience. Now the work of the law is faith, which, when it presents what is spoken to God, by natural judgment shows that it is itself a law to them; because what the law commands, it freely does, namely, that it believes in Christ.

Romans 2:15b ***With their own conscience bearing witness to them.***

By their inner conscience as witness they believe, because they are aware within themselves that what they believe is fitting for them; for it is appropriate for a creature to believe in and venerate

its Creator, nor is it absurd that a servant should acknowledge his Lord.

> **<u>Romans 2:16</u>** ***And with their thoughts accusing one another, or even defending one another, on the day when God will judge the hidden things of men according to my Gospel, through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

Since he said that the unbelieving Jews would be judged by the Law (for the Law will accuse them, which promised Christ to them, whom, when he came, they refused to receive), but the Gentiles, who certainly do not have the Law, will be judged by their conscience if they are unwilling to believe. First, the believing Gentiles will be accusers of the unbelieving Gentiles; just as the Lord says to the unbelieving Jews about his disciples: They will be your judges (Matt. 12:27); because the unbelief of the Jews will be judged by the faith of the apostles, who, though they were of them, believed while they were unbelieving. Then the Gentiles will be accused by their own thoughts if, having been pierced in conscience, they refuse to believe in the faith and power of the Creator: or if, through a certain dullness, they do not reflect so as to believe in the words and deeds of the Lord, defending themselves by conscience on the day of judgment, because he did not think that he ought to believe; and he is judged not as wicked, but as ignorant; yet they will not be without punishment, because it is not permitted to be ignorant of this. For he signifies the Gentiles in a twofold manner, both believers and the faithless; for above he speaks about believing Gentiles: afterward he adds also concerning those Gentiles who do not believe; so that just as believers are praised by their conscience, so also the unbelievers are accused by their conscience. For although he who has not believed seems to himself in no way guilty, because he could not deal with this within himself, yet he is convicted by reason;

because he did not persuade himself that this is true, which he saw confirmed by testimonies of miracles, and followed by many.

I think it can also be understood in this way, if the whole question is believed to have been spoken about believing Gentiles, because Paul says: What business is it of mine to judge those who are outside? (1 Cor. 5:12). And, He who does not believe, he says, is already judged (Jn. 3:18). And, For the wicked shall not rise in the judgment (Ps. 1:5). For those who sin without the law will also perish without the law; and therefore they will not be able to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account; because, when they rise, they will be led to Gehenna. Those whom he says are accused or defended by their thoughts on the day of God's judgment are Christians who are at odds with Catholic truth, holding different opinions about Christ, or about the sense of the Law in the tradition of the Church, whether Cataphrygians *[also called Montanists]*, or Novatians, or Donatists, or other heretics. The thoughts of these will accuse one another on the day of judgment; if someone has understood that Catholic doctrine is true, and, so as not to appear corrected, refused to follow it, being ashamed to depart from what he had long held, on the day of judgment he will be accused by his own thought. For two thoughts in a man will accuse one another, the good and the bad. The good accuses the bad, because it contradicted the truth; the bad in turn accuses the good, because it did not follow what it felt; and, through this, he who has thought, sensing that the Catholic Church is good and true, and has remained in heresy or schism, is established as guilty. But the thoughts of him who has always thought this, supposing what he followed to be useful, will defend one another. For he will say: I have always thought in my thoughts that what I followed was useful: this was my faith. He will have a lighter case, although he must be corrected; because he will not be accused by his conscience on the day of judgment. In this way the

hidden things of men will be judged on the day of God's judgment through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 2:17 ***But if you are called a Jew.***

The surname "Jew" exists because, by the privilege of their ancestors, they are called Israelites. And yet, if we wish to grasp fully everything that relates to the matter, we ought to notice that the surname "Jew" is signified in a threefold way. First, because they are sons of Abraham, who by the merit of his faith was appointed the father of all nations. Then, on account of Jacob, who for the sake of the increase of faith was called Israel; for the dignity begun in the father is dignified in the children. Third, not so much on account of Judah as on account of Christ; for since He came from Judah according to the flesh, they are called Jews, because in Judah was signified what was to come in Christ. For it is said: "Judah shall be your leader" (Judg. 20:18); and, "Judah, your brothers shall praise you" (Gen. 49:8). This praise given to Judah is not proved to belong to him, but to Christ, whom all those whom He consented to call His brothers praise daily. For He Himself said to the women: "Go, and tell my brothers that I go before you into Galilee" (Matt. 28:7). For who does not praise Him by whose favor he lives? The Apostle, therefore, under this meaning, which is later in order, but greater in merit, wished everything to be understood: which the Jews, not understanding, claim for themselves the name of the carnal Judah.

Romans 2:18 ***And you rest in the Law, and you glory in God, and you know His will, and you approve the things that are better, being instructed by the Law.***

A Jew does not wish to appear very admirable if he believes; for he is, after all, instructed by the Law. But it is very dangerous if

he does not believe; for he has the Law as his guide. Yet, so that the believer may be given preference, the merit of the Fathers brings this about; because although someone may flourish on his own, he is nevertheless put to shame in what is his own.

Romans 2:19-20 ***And you are confident that you yourself are a guide of the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little ones, having the pattern of knowledge and truth in the Law.***

These things are true; for the purpose of the Law is this: to instruct the ignorant and to subject the profane to God; or to call the wicked away from the worship of idols, by means of the promise that was given through the Law, to the confidence of a better hope. Therefore the teacher of the Law rightly glories in these things, because he hands on the pattern of truth. But if he does not receive Him whom the Law has promised, he glories in the Law in vain, and does it injury, since he ridicules Christ, who is promised in the Law; and he will no longer be an instructor of the foolish, nor a teacher of little ones, nor a light to those who are in darkness, but a leader of all these to perdition.

Romans 2:21 ***So then, you who teach another, do not teach yourself.***

That is, you who accuse the Gentiles of being without Law and without God, do not accuse yourself: for distrusting Christ who was promised in the Law, you are found in the very things that you accuse.

Romans 2:22a ***You who preach that one must not steal, you steal; for you do what you preach should not be done.***

Indeed, while you secretly undermine faith in Christ through a corrupt interpretation, you deny our Christ who was promised in the Law.

Romans 2:22b ***You who say that one must not commit adultery, you commit adultery***.

But you commit adultery against the Law when you remove the truth of Christ and put falsehood in its place. Therefore in another passage he says: Adulterators of the word of God. (2 Cor. 2:17).

Romans 2:22c ***You who curse idols, you commit sacrilege:***

You are sacrilegious when you deny Christ, whom the Law and the prophetic word signify as God; for Isaiah says: Because in you is God, and there is no God besides you. You are indeed God, and we did not know it: the God of Israel, the Savior (Isa. 45:14). Were the Jews speaking of God the Father when they said: You indeed are God, and we did not know it; when the whole Law proclaims the authority of God the Father, from whom are all things? Rather, since the Son of God did indeed always appear, yet it was hidden who he was; when after the resurrection he is recognized, it is said to him in confession: You indeed are God, and we did not know it. And he who in the Law was thought to be only an Angel and the leader of the army of the Lord, when he is understood to be the Son of God, it is said to him with thanksgiving: You indeed are God, and we did not know it. Therefore this signifies that it was he himself who had appeared to the patriarchs as God and was later incarnate, but had not been understood by all.

Romans 2:23 ***You who glory in the Law, through transgressing the Law dishonor God.***

You are a transgressor of the Law when you bypass the meaning of the Law, which concerns the incarnation and divinity of Christ; and you dishonor God when you do not accept the testimony that He has given about His Son. For He Himself said: This is my beloved Son (Matt. 3:17).

Romans 2:24 ***For the name of God is blasphemed among the nations because of you, as it is written*** (Isa. 52:5).

Isaiah the prophet said this, because the name of God is blasphemed among the nations when they did not realize that the Jews had been handed over to them on account of their own offenses; instead they ascribed glory to their idols, as though they had defeated the God of the Jews in the Jews themselves. So also in the time of the apostles the name of God was blasphemed in Christ; for by denying that Christ is God, the Jews were blaspheming the Father as well, just as the Lord says: "He who receives me does not receive me, but him who sent me" (Luke 9:48). And therefore he was blasphemed among the nations, because the Jews tried to persuade the believing Gentiles that Christ should not be believed to be God, so that the blasphemy of the nations might have its origin from the Jews or from the followers of Photinus.

Romans 2:25a ***Circumcision indeed is of benefit, if you observe the Law.***

It can be said in reply: If circumcision is beneficial, why is it set aside? But then it is beneficial if you observe the Law. Circumcision, therefore, must be maintained; and in order that it

may be able to benefit, the Law must be kept. What then forbade that which, if the Law is observed, is shown to be beneficial? It therefore seems wrongly forbidden, since it is not displeasing in itself, but is said to be rendered useless by another's negligence.

Romans 2:25b ***But if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.***

This is what he says, because if the Law has not been kept, the Jew becomes a Gentile. But he took circumcision as standing for the lineage of Abraham, because circumcision comes from Abraham; for he could not build up what he had destroyed. He says this in order to teach that it is then beneficial to be of the stock of Abraham, if the Law is kept, that is, if there is belief in Christ, who was promised to Abraham; because those who are justified by faith have their own merit, and are exalted by the honor of the Fathers. For all salvation in the Law is about Christ. Therefore, he keeps the Law who believes in Christ; but if he does not believe, he is a transgressor of the Law, because he does not receive Christ, whom the Law foretold would come for justification, which it itself could not give. And it will be of no benefit to him to be called a son of Abraham, because he is a son of Abraham according to merit who follows the faith by which Abraham became worthy of God. Therefore he says: *Your circumcision has become uncircumcision*, that is, you have been made like a Gentile, not believing in him who, under the sign of circumcision, was promised as a son to Abraham.

Romans 2:26 ***If, therefore, the foreskin keeps the righteousness of the Law, will not that foreskin be reckoned to them as circumcision?***

The righteousness of the Law is Christian faith, just as he says elsewhere: “For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness for everyone who believes” (Rom. 10:4). Therefore it is clear that if a Gentile believes in Christ, he becomes a son of Abraham, who is the father of faith.

> **Romans 2:27** ***And he will judge, as circumcision by nature, you who, while completing the Law, are a transgressor of the Law through the letter and circumcision.***

The believing Gentile, led by nature, in Christ condemns the Jew, to whom the Law had promised Christ, and who was unwilling to believe in Him when He came. How great, then, is the glory the Gentile deserves, who by nature alone understood the author, as the apostle Peter says: But you killed the Author of life (Acts 3:15); and so much the more must the Jew be punished, who recognized Christ as the author neither through nature nor through the Law.

> **Romans 2:28-29** ***For the one who is outwardly so is not a Jew; nor is that which is outward, in the flesh, circumcision. Rather, the one who is a Jew is so in what is hidden; and circumcision is that of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God.***

It is not unclear that he denies that circumcision of the flesh has praise before God (for Abraham was not justified because he was circumcised, but because he believed he was justified, and afterwards he was circumcised), whereas circumcision of the heart is praiseworthy before God. For to circumcise the heart, by cutting away error, is to acknowledge the Creator. And because the circumcision of the heart was to come, Moses first said: You shall

circumcise the hardness of your heart (Deut. 10:16). And likewise Jeremiah: Circumcise the foreskin of your heart (Jer. 4:4). He said this to the Jews who followed idols; for there is a veil over the heart, which, when turned to God, he circumcises; because faith removes the mist of error and grants a perfect knowledge of God in the mystery of the Trinity, which was unknown from ages past. The praise of this circumcision, therefore, is from God, hidden from men; for it is a merit of the heart which God looks upon, not of the flesh. For the praise of the Jews is from men; for they glory in the circumcision of the flesh, that it is from the Fathers. Therefore, among other things, he says: And their glory is in their shame, who savor earthly things (Phil. 3:19); that is, those who think circumcision of the flesh is glory. For he who glories in the flesh savors earthly things; but he who glories in the spirit, his praise is from God; for it is by the spirit, not the flesh, that one believes.

Chapter 3

Romans 3:1-2 ***For what advantage does the Jew have, or what is the benefit of circumcision? Much in every way. First of all, because the oracles of God were entrusted to them.***

Although there are many things that refer to the honor and merit of the seed of Abraham, he openly mentions only this, because their greatest praise is that they were judged worthy to receive the Law, through which they might learn to distinguish what is right from what is perverse, so that after this first point they could understand what the rest are like. But since he shows that for carnal Jews, that is, unbelievers, the testimony of their lineage profits nothing, lest he seem to have treated all, including

believers, harshly, he teaches that it is very useful for believing Jews that they are sons of Abraham. For to them the oracles of God were entrusted, when they received the Law, which had been worn out by the sins of men, as though one could sin with immunity before God, now renewed by virtue of the Fathers; and they are called the people of God. Egypt also, on account of the wrongs done to them, is struck with various plagues; they are fed with heavenly bread; they are a terror to all nations, as Rahab the prostitute bears witness; and to them also Christ the Savior was promised for sanctification (Jos. 2:9 ff.). Therefore he says that it is very useful for the Jews in every way that they are sons of Abraham: for they are preferred to the Gentiles, but those who believe.

Romans 3:3 ***For what if some of them did not believe? Will their unbelief make void the faithfulness of God? Far from it.***

He does not say that because some of the Jews were unwilling to believe what God promised to the children of Abraham, the other Jews will therefore be bigoted, so that they are deemed unworthy to receive what God has promised to the faithful; especially since the promise was made in such a way that it would benefit those who believe. Therefore God, not being angered on account of the deceit of those, that is, of the Jews, will give to the others who believe eternal life, which He promised would come through faith in Christ; because those who did not believe made themselves unworthy, without prejudice to the rest. Having said this, he praises the believing Jews; for nothing harms them because many of their number were unwilling to believe.

<u>Romans 3:4</u> ***For God is truthful [verax], but every man a liar, as it is written: "That you may be justified in your words, and may overcome when you are judged"*** (Ps. 50:6).

To strengthen what he said above, that God is faithful [*fidelis*] in His promise and every man a liar, he added a prophetic example from the fiftieth psalm, in which both God is shown to be justified in His words, and man is marked as a liar on account of unbelief. For both are read in the book of Psalms: that God is just and truthful, and every man a liar (Ps. 85:15). He calls man a liar when he does not believe what God has promised; for the one who denies that He will give what He has promised is a liar. And since he himself is a liar, he in many ways declares God to be a liar when he does not believe His promises. Therefore he calls every man a liar who lacks trust in the promises of God. Yet this applies especially to the Jews, whose case the Apostle is dealing with in this passage: they, seeing Christ, denied that He was the one whom God had promised; and therefore they are declared liars. But God is truthful, who sent Christ as He had promised; and so He overcomes when He is judged, because He will give what He is denied to be going to give. For when He is not believed, He is judged a liar. But when He gives what He is judged not to be going to give, He overcomes, showing Himself truthful and the one who does not believe His words to be a liar. For he will see the Son of God in majesty, whom he now denies; he will also see the resurrection of the flesh and will know that his faithlessness has been defeated by the promise and the truth of God. For Christ too, when He was judged, overcame: for He was unjustly put to death and made the Devil guilty, whom He had already overcome by not sinning, so that, being defeated a second time, the Devil would lose those whom he held.

<u>Romans 3:5-6a</u> ***But if our unrighteousness conveys the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak according to man.) Far from it.***

The Apostle says this according to the sense of the prophet David. Now David, when he had sinned in the matter of Uriah the Hittite (2 Kings 11), knowing that a promise cannot be given to sinners, prays that the justification of the words of God may prevail in the judgment by which those who sin are judged (Ps. 51:6), and that, by sanctifying the penitent, He may reform him, so as to give him what He has promised to give to the righteous. And therefore he adds: *But if our unrighteousness conveys the righteousness of God,* etc., that is, if because we are sinners, God is justified, He would be unjust if He were to punish. For if our unrighteousness were of benefit to Him, then without doubt He would be unjust if He condemned sinners, since our unrighteousness makes God righteous, if, while we are sinners, He gives to us what He has promised to the saints. For although we are sinners, we are nevertheless reformed through repentance, so that, being cleansed, we may merit to receive the promise, no longer as sinners. Therefore the meaning of the prophet David's words is not, when he says: Against you alone have I sinned, and done evil before you; that you may be justified in your words and may prevail when you are judged (Ps. 51:4), that which is maintained by the wicked interpretation of wicked men: namely, that the sins of men and evil deeds contribute to God's justification, and that through our evils He appears good, and our unrighteousness shows Him to be just. Since therefore God is not unjust when He inflicts wrath, He is no longer justified by our sins; for if He were justified by our sins, He would be unjust if He avenged them. But because He is not unjust when He punishes, it is clear that our unrighteousness does not convey the righteousness of God. For if it did commend it, He would not punish, because He is just.

And therefore he adds: *I speak,* he says, *according to man. Far from it;* that is, far be it that God should be called unjust, because this belongs to man, who plainly can err, and be deceived, and deceive. For God remains unchangeable, nor can He fail to love what He has made.

Romans 3:6b ***Otherwise, how will God judge this world?***

It is true that it would not be just for God to judge the world if its sins were of benefit to Him, so that, while men sin by His permission and then obtain pardon, God would appear good; and if they did not sin, He would not appear just. For if they do not sin, then, having no one to forgive, He would not be good.

Romans 3:7 ***For if the truth of God has flourished to His glory through my lie, why am I still judged as a sinner?***

It is clear that if the lie of men advances the glory of God, so that He alone may appear true, those who sin are not to be called sinners; for they will seem to sin not by their own will, but by His impulse, which be far from us.

Romans 3:8 ***And is it not, as we are slandered and as some claim we say, "Let us do evil so that good may come"?***

Paul now makes clear on whose account he discusses these things carefully and with reverence. For this was alleged by depraved people, as though this were the meaning of those who preach the forgiveness of sins: that they should do evil so that good might come, that is, that they should sin so that, by forgiving them, God might appear good, according to what was said above. This he calls blasphemy and rejects as foreign to the meaning of divine

teaching. For faith does not hand down that one ought to sin, since it proclaims that God will judge; rather, it gives counsel to those who go astray, so that, having regained salvation and now living under the law of God, they may no longer sin.

And for this reason he added: ***Whose condemnation is just***; that is, the condemnation of those people who, out of jealous envy, interpret this about us as was said above, is just. For the Jews were boasting of this in order to accuse apostolic teaching, saying that when they preach the forgiveness of sins, they supply fuel for sinning; so that, as if people were secure because of forgiveness, they would readily sin. Yet it is clear that after receiving the faith, it is dangerous to sin, and this is proclaimed to believers.

Romans 3:9 ***What then? Do we excel them? By no means. For we have brought a charge that Jews and Greeks are all under sin.***

That is, why do we still linger, speaking at greater length? For we have shown, by setting forth the grounds, that both Jews and Greeks are all guilty, and that therefore the Law is kept in vain. First, he shows that the Greeks are guilty according to the law of nature, and that they did not even accept the Law of Moses; for which reason their case is very bad and exceedingly grave. Then he also shows that the Jews are guilty, who appear to live under the law of God, and who might rightly defend their own dignity on account of the fathers, especially because they have despised the promise made to the fathers, thereby rendering the grace of God of no effect. To confirm this, he adds a prophetic example from the thirteenth psalm, saying:

Romans 3:10 ***As it is written, that there is no one who is righteous*** (Ps. 13:4, etc.).

From unrighteousness he began to list their evil deeds, and in part to add worse ones, so that he might show that no hope is seen in these things, unless they beg for the mercy of Christ, who forgives sins.

Romans 3:11a Then he added: "***There is no one who understands.***"

This is true, because if a person made an effort to understand, he would not be unrighteous.

Romans 3:11b ***"There is no one who seeks God."***

This too is evident, because if he understood how beneficial it would be, he would seek God, and would not act like Asa, king of Judah, who after many benefits from God became so corrupted that, when he suffered an illness in his feet and a prophet was present, he did not seek God. (2 Chron. 16:12)

Romans 3:12a ***"They have all turned aside, together they have become worthless"*** (1 Kings 15:23).

No one doubts that all who do not seek God turn aside so as to look for help in vanity; but an idol is vanity, and therefore they become useless.

Romans 3:12b ***"There is none who does good, not even one."***

Since they have neglected God and become useless, they are of course unable to do good; already corrupted, they advance from bad to worse.

Romans 3:13a ***Their throat is an open grave.***

Already enslaved to evil, they wanted to devour the good, if it were possible; so that, just as a grave lies open to receive corpses, so too their throat is open against the righteous.

Romans 3:13b ***With their tongues they dealt deceitfully.***

Having become accustomed to such evil deeds, whatever they spoke was in deceit.

Romans 3:13c ***The poison of asps is under their lips.***

Paul says this because the words of such people are a snare. For they speak with this purpose: to deceive; just as poison is poured out through the lips of a serpent, so through their lips come guile and trickery.

Romans 3:14 ***Their mouth is full of curse and bitterness.***

It is clear that the wicked always hurl curses and bitter words against the good, breaking out in insults and slander against them.

Romans 3:15 ***Swift are their feet to shed blood.***

This Paul said about the murder of the prophets, whom they killed without delay, sluggish for what is good, swift for murder.

Romans 3:16a ***Contrition and unhappiness are in their ways.***

Since they had been quick to do evil, it declares that their path or step is troubled and unhappy.

Romans 3:16b ***And the way of peace they have not known.***

The way of peace is gentle and undisturbed; for every good life is calm, and modest actions themselves are peaceful, and through these one goes to God. They therefore, unwilling to know these things, chose the way of tribulation, by which one goes into Gehenna.

Romans 3:17 ***There is no fear of God before their eyes.***

For such people, being without understanding, do not have the fear of God; for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," says Solomon (Prov. 1:7). And Paul did not say that they do not have the fear of God, but: "*There is*," he says, "*no fear of God before their eyes*." For seeing their own wicked deeds and not shuddering, they are said not to have the fear of God before their eyes. All these people are also indicated by the prophet Jeremiah, when he says among other things: "Then all rose up against the prophet of the Lord, wanting to kill him. And it continues: But all the people did not permit it" (Jer. 26:8, 16). Therefore he speaks of "all" of them, yet meaning the wicked; and of "all" these, meaning the good. For when he says, "All have turned aside," he does not mean the whole people without exception, but this portion of the people, just as the aforementioned prophet relates: among whom all the wicked have gathered themselves. For there

are always two peoples within one nation. This, then, is the people whom the Lord rebukes under the name of Jerusalem, saying: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets" (Matt. 23:37). And in another place: "An evil and adulterous generation," he says, and "Brood of vipers" (Matt. 12:39). Concerning such people the prophet Isaiah also laments, saying: "Woe to the sinful nation, a wicked seed!" (Isa. 1:4). For through evil will, while they produce evil fruits, they are a wicked seed. And because, if they wish, they can be converted, the voice of the Apostle proves this in another Epistle, when Paul says: "We were by nature children of wrath, just like the others at one time" (Eph. 2:3).

Romans 3:18 ***Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law.***

It is clear that the Law accuses those who at first did not believe their leader Moses, nor obeyed their fathers the prophets, whom they persecuted and killed, nor the apostles, their kinsmen according to the flesh, whose blood they shed, always wicked and rebellious against God, so that they may be condemned by the Law, whose authority they thought could be despised. For just as there is one cause of all evils in what is evil, so also of all goods. In these, therefore, the evil common to all who are like them is condemned. These things concern the confusion of the Jews, who drew testimony for themselves and their fathers from the Law.

Romans 3:19 ***So that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be made subject to God.***

Paul says this because, with the Jews bound in sins, the whole world is made subject to God. For no one doubts that the pagans were overwhelmed by sins and transgressions, and therefore the whole world is laid low before God, so that it may be able to attain

forgiveness; for the whole world consisted of Jews and Gentiles, from whom the faithful have been set apart. When, therefore, he proves that the Jews, who received the Law from God and to whom the promise was made, are liable to sins, there is no doubt that all the Greeks are guilty of death. Therefore*: Let every mouth be stopped,* he says, a*nd let the whole world be made subject to God*; since all, proven guilty, are in need of the mercy of God, both Jews and also Greeks.

Romans 3:20a ***Since indeed no flesh shall be justified by the works of the Law before God.***

Paul does not therefore claim that men are by no means justified before God because they did not keep the law of righteousness in its commandments; but because they were unwilling to believe in the sacrament of the mystery of God which is in Christ. For by this God decreed to justify man, not by the law, because the law justifies for a time, not before God. Therefore those who keep the law are just in time, but not before God, because the faith by which men are justified before God is not in them. For faith is greater than the law, because the law pertains to us, faith to God. Therefore the law has temporal righteousness, faith eternal. For in saying "all flesh" he meant "every man," just as the prophet Isaiah also says: And all flesh shall see the salvation of God (Isa. 40:5); that is, every man shall see the Christ of God, in whom the salvation of all is contained. And therefore they are signified by "flesh," because they are subject to sins. For just as righteousness makes men spiritual, so sins make them carnal, so that a man receives his name from his way of acting.

Romans 3:20b ***For by the law comes the knowledge of sin, but by faith its removal.***

Therefore faith is to be followed. What is this law, through which Paul says that sin became known, and how was it made known? For we see that the ancients were not ignorant of sin; since Joseph too was cast into prison, though by false accusation (Gen. 39:20), and Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker because of sin (Gen. 40:3). How then were sins hidden? The law is indeed threefold: so that the first part concerns the sacrament of the divinity of God; the second, which agrees with the natural law, which forbids sin; and the third, of works, that is, of the sabbath, the new moon, circumcision, etc. This therefore is the natural law, which, partly renewed through Moses and partly confirmed in its authority for restraining vices, made sin known, not that it was hidden, as I said, but it showed that the sins which are committed will not go unpunished before God, lest perhaps someone who escapes for a time be thought to have mocked the law. This is what the law shows.

Romans 3:21 ***Now indeed, without the Law, the justice of God has been revealed, having testimony from the Law and the prophets.***

It has been made clear that the justice of God has appeared without the Law, yet without the law of the sabbath and of circumcision and of the new moon and of vengeance; but not without the sacrament of the divinity of God, since the justice of God is from the sacrament of God. For when those whom the Law held as guilty, the justice of God forgave them, it certainly did this without the Law; because for those against whom the Law was going to take vengeance, this (justice) granted them forgiveness of sin. And lest this be thought to have been done against the Law, he added that the justice of God has testimony from the Law and the prophets, that is, because the Law itself in another place had long ago said that this would come to pass; that He was going to come

who would save mankind (Isa. 19:20): which had not been granted to the Law, namely, to forgive sins. But it has been called the justice of God, which seems to be mercy, because it has its origin from the promise; and when the promise of God is fulfilled, it is called the justice of God. For it is justice, because what was promised has been repaid; and when it receives those who flee to it, it is called justice, because not to receive one who flees for refuge is injustice.

Romans 3:22a ***But the righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ.***

What else does "*through faith in Jesus Christ*" mean, except that the righteousness of God itself is the revealing of Christ? For through faith in the preaching of Jesus Christ, the gift long ago promised by God is recognized or received.

Romans 3:22b ***Upon all or over all who believe.***

That is, over all Jews and Greeks who believe in the true righteousness of God.

Romans 3:23 ***For there is no distinction; for all have sinned and are in need of the glory of God.***

Because he had said that the righteousness of God is over all Jews and Greeks, to prove this he added: *For all*, he says, *have sinned*. This is to be taken in a general sense, so that both Jews and Greeks are understood; therefore he says: *There is no distinction*; for by "*all*" he includes everyone here, even the priests, to show that the law was of no benefit without faith. For the law was given in such a way that there should be faith in the law, which would hope for

the salvation to come. Therefore the death of Christ has profited all, because in this world he both taught what must be believed and observed, and he delivered all from hell.

Romans 3:24a ***Justified freely by his grace.***

They have been justified freely, because, doing nothing and rendering nothing in return, they have been justified by faith alone as a gift of God.

Romans 3:24b ***Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.***

He bears witness that the grace of God is in Christ; because by the will of God we have been redeemed by Christ, so that, having been set free, we might be justified, just as Paul also says to the Galatians: Christ redeemed us (Gal. 3:13), offering himself for us. For he allowed himself to be handed over to the raging Devil, but without the Devil's knowing it beforehand. Thinking that he could hold Christ, he received him, as it were; but because he was not able to endure his power, he lost all those whom he held, together with him.

Romans 3:25a ***God has set forth as an atoner through faith.***

He says this because in Christ God has set forth, that is, he has ordained, that he would be gracious toward the human race, if they believe.

Romans 3:25b ***In his blood.***

Therefore "*in his blood*," because by his death we have been freed; so that he might both show him as having died, and condemn death by his passion.

Romans 3:26a ***To show forth His justice,***

That is, to reveal His promise by which He would free us from sins, just as He had previously promised; and when He fulfilled this, He showed Himself to be just.

Romans 3:26b ***On account of the restraint of previous sins, in the patience of God.***

Knowing the purpose of His kindness, by which He resolved to come to the aid of sinners, both those who are among the blessed above and those who were held in hell; He long waited for both, annulling the sentence by which it seemed just that all should be condemned, in order to show us that He had long ago decreed to deliver the human race through Christ, as He promised through the prophet Jeremiah, saying: I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more (Jer. 31:34). And lest it might seem that He had promised this gift to the Jews alone, He says through Isaiah: My house shall be called a house of prayer among all nations (Isa. 56:7). For although the promise was made to Judaism, yet God, foreknowing that the ungodly Jews would reject His gift, promised that He would admit the Gentiles to receive His grace, so that through their jealousy the ungodly Jews, sent into wrath, would be tormented.

Romans 3:26c ***In this time.***

That is, in our time, when God has given what He once promised He would give at the time when He gave it. So that He might be just, justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ. He rightly says this, because in order that He might be just, He gave what He had promised; and this He had promised, that He would justify those who believe in Christ. And He says in Habakkuk: But the righteous man lives by faith (Hab. 2:4); so that, while he has faith in God and in Christ, he may be righteous.

Romans 3:27 ***Where then is your boasting? It is omitted. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.***

Having given the explanation, Paul speaks to those who live under the law, that they boast without cause, flattering themselves because of the law and because they are of the lineage of Abraham, seeing that a person is not justified before God except by faith.

Romans 3:28 ***For we hold that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law.***

Paul says that the Gentile is regarded as one who is certainly justified when he believes, doing no works of the law, that is, without circumcision, or new moons, or the observance of the Sabbath.

Romans 3:29 ***Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.***

Without doubt there is one God of all. For the Jews cannot claim for themselves alone that God is theirs and not also the God of the Gentiles, since they themselves trace the origin of all from one Adam, and forbid no foreigner who wishes to come to the Law

from doing so. In fact, some Egyptians went out with them into the wilderness, whom they are commanded to receive (Exod. 12:28 ff.), on the sole condition that they be circumcised and eat unleavened bread or the Passover together with them; and likewise that Cornelius, a Gentile who did not live as a Jew, received the gift of God and that he was justified, is proved by divine testimony (Acts 10:31).

Romans 3:30 ***Since indeed there is one God, who justified the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith.***

In "*circumcision*" he means the Jews, because by faith in the promise they were justified, believing this to be the Christ whom God had promised in the Law. In "*uncircumcision*," however, he means the Gentiles, justified before God through faith in Christ. For he justified both Gentiles and Jews in no other way than as believers; for since there is one God of all, he justified all by one and the same principle. What then does circumcision of the flesh profit, or what harm is there in uncircumcision, when neither dignity nor merit is produced by anything except faith?

Romans 3:31 ***Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yes, we establish the law.***

Indeed, the law is not made void through faith, but fulfilled; for its status is confirmed, when faith testifies that what it said would come has arrived. This is for the sake of the Jews, who think that the faith of Christ is hostile to the law, being ignorant of the sense of the law. Therefore, he does not make void the law, when he already teaches that it ought to cease; because he asserts that it was rightly given in its own time, but that it ought not to act any longer. For in the law itself it is said that at the time of the fulfilled

promise the law ought to cease; for the angel Gabriel, to the prophet Daniel who had the desire to know this matter, shows (Dan. 9:25), saying among other things, that with Christ coming, the chrism, that is, the royal anointing, which is understood as power, will cease. And judgment, he says, will no longer be, which is the law, and my sacrifice will be taken away. Therefore, he says 'my', so that it might be known that the old offering would cease. Revealing this sense, the Savior says: The law and the prophets were until John (Luke 16:16). And because with the law of Moses ceasing, God was about to give better precepts, the prophet Jeremiah sang, saying: Behold, the days will come, says the Lord, and I will consummate with the house of Israel and the house of Judah a New Testament, not according to that which I gave to their fathers (Jerem. 31:31). To those, certainly, who received the coming Christ from the promise. Therefore the Savior says: I came not, he says, to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill (Matt. 5:17). And because the house of God was to be not only in Jerusalem alone, but also in other places, the prophet Zachariah says: I will place Jerusalem among all nations (Zach. 12:2): which is the Church.

Chapter 4

Romans 4:1 ***What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, found?***

After he has shown that no one can be justified before God by works of the Law, he adds that not even *Abraham* was able to merit anything *according to the flesh*. By “flesh” he meant circumcision, because Abraham sought nothing by means of circumcision. For he was justified before he was circumcised.

Romans 4:2 ***For if Abraham was justified by the works of the Law, he has glory, but not with God.***

This is what is being set forth. For Abraham was justified by faith, which no one doubts; therefore he has glory with God. But since those who keep the law, whether that of Moses or the natural law, are justified for the present so that they may not be guilty in the present judgment, he therefore says: *If Abraham was justified by the works of the law, he does not have glory with God*; for, he says, "whoever shall have done the law shall live in it," (Gal. 3:12, Rom. 10:5, Lev. 18:5) that is, he will not die as one guilty; yet he will not from this have merit with God, but on account of faith.

Romans 4:3 ***For what does Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness*** (Gen. 15:6).

It has shown that Abraham does not have glory before God because he was circumcised or because he kept himself from iniquity, but because he believed God; therefore he was justified and will obtain the reward of his praise in the future.

Romans 4:4 ***But to him who works, the reward is not reckoned according to grace, but according to debt.***

It is settled that for him who is subject to the law of deeds, that is, of Moses, or to the natural law, merit is not counted toward a reward so that he may have glory before God. For he is a debtor to do the law, because necessity is laid upon him by the law, so that, whether he wills or not, he does the law lest he be condemned, as it says elsewhere: But those who despise it experience condemnation for themselves, because they are at present liable to judgment (Rom. 13:2). But to believe or not to

believe belongs to the will. For no one can be forced to accept what is not revealed, but is invited; for it is not forced, but urged by persuasion. Therefore the one who consents ought to be granted rewards, just as Abraham, who believed what he did not see.

Romans 4:5a ***To the one who does not work,***

That is, to the one who is liable for sins, who does not do what the law commands.

Romans 4:5b ***But to the one who believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.***

Paul says this because, without works of the law, the ungodly, namely the Gentile, who believes in Christ, has his faith reckoned as righteousness, just as Abraham did. How then do the Jews think they are justified by the works of the law with the justification of Abraham, when they see that Abraham was justified not by the works of the law, but by faith alone? Therefore the law is not needed, since the ungodly is justified before God by faith alone.

Romans 4:5c ***According to the purpose of God's grace.***

Therefore it is decreed by God that, with the law ceasing, the grace of God should require faith alone for salvation.

Romans 4:6a ***Just as David also says.***

Paul reinforces this very point with the example of the prophet:

Romans 4:6b ***the blessedness of the person to whom God credits righteousness without works.***

He calls blessed those for whom God has ordained this, that without labor and any observance, they are justified before God by faith alone. Therefore, he proclaims the blessedness of the time in which Christ was born, as the Lord himself says: Many righteous people and prophets have desired to see what you see, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it (Matt. 13:13).

Romans 4:7-8 ***Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord has not charged for sin*** (Ps. 31:1 etc.).

Clearly, *blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered* without any labor or work, with no works of penance required of them, except only that they believe. *Blessed too is this man to whom the Lord has not charged sin*. To forgive, to cover, and not to charge are one and the same in principle and meaning; for all are obtained and given in one and the same way.

However, some think there is a threefold reasoning in these sayings, because the prophet used different words, and because he passes from the plural number to the singular. For when the Word of God, in its abundance of grace, wishes to count the various names of sin through the terms for offenses, he speaks more broadly; yet the words are of one and the same form and meaning, since when he covers, he forgives; and when he forgives, he does not charge. He speaks at length in praise of the grace of God, so that he may magnify that grace. For he established three degrees on account of the diversity of offenses: the first degree is iniquity or wickedness, when the Creator is not acknowledged; the second is in works of grave sins; and the third, in lesser sins; yet all of

these are blotted out in baptism. By these three degrees he signified the whole body of sin.

How, however, can this apply to the person of those who do penance, when he says: Blessed are those whose sins are covered; since it is evident that penitents obtain the forgiveness of sins by labor and weeping? Or how does that which he says agree with martyrdom: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord has not charged for sin; since we know that the glory of martyrdom is obtained through sufferings and afflictions?

But the prophet, foreseeing the blessed time in the coming of the Savior, calls blessed those whose sins are forgiven, covered, and not charged to them without labor or any work, through the washing. Yet the Apostle, on account of the fullness of times, and because there is more grace in the apostles than there was in the prophets, proclaims greater things which we obtain from the gift of baptism; for he professes that we not only receive the forgiveness of sins, but are justified and made sons of God; so that this blessedness may have perfect security and glory.

Romans 4:9a ***So then, does this blessedness remain only in circumcision, or also in uncircumcision?***

That is, has this blessedness of Abraham been granted only to his circumcised children, or also to those who are uncircumcised? For if, at that time, the nations were not forbidden to come to the law and the promise of Abraham, how could it be that, in the time of Christ, those coming to grace would be forbidden, when God has fully stirred us up by grace?

Romans 4:9b ***For we say, this is, if we speak according to the meaning of the law, that faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.***

Paul begins from the origin, so as to shut out every avoidance of splitting hairs; for one who is excluded from the starting point has nothing from which to begin raising a question.

Romans 4:10-11 ***How then was it reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith which he had while in uncircumcision, so that he might be the father of all who believe while in uncircumcision, that righteousness might also be reckoned to them*** (Gen. 17:10–11).

Abraham, while he was in uncircumcision, believed God. What did he believe? That he would have offspring, that is, a son, in whom all nations would be justified through faith in uncircumcision, just as Abraham himself was justified. For he received circumcision as a sign of the righteousness of faith: believing that he would have a son, he received a sign of this thing he believed, so that, because he was justified by believing, it might be evident. Therefore circumcision itself has no dignity, but is only a sign. The sons of Abraham received this sign so that they might be known as his sons, he who, believing God, had received this sign; that they might be imitators of their father's faith and believe in Jesus, who was promised to Abraham, of whom Isaac was born as a figure. For it is not in Isaac that all nations are blessed, but in Christ: "For there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12), says the Apostle Peter.

Romans 4:12 ***And let him be the father of circumcision not only of those who are from the circumcision, but also of those who follow in the footsteps of the faith that is in the foreskin of our father Abraham.***

Paul says this because, by believing, Abraham was first made the father of circumcision, but of the heart, not only of those who are from his lineage, but also of those from the nations who likewise believe. For according to the flesh he is the father of the Jews, but according to faith he is the father of all who believe.

Romans 4:13 ***For the promise made to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.***

It is clear that neither had the Law yet been given, nor was circumcision already in place, when the promise was already made to Abraham as he believed, and to his seed, which is Christ, who would wash away the sins of men. Therefore John the Baptist says: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:19). Therefore he did not become heir of the world by reason of the merit of an observed law, but by faith. Now the heir of the world is the heir of the land, which he obtained in his children; but Christ is heir of the nations, as David sings: And I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession (Ps. 14:8); for we shall die and live with him.

Romans 4:14a ***For if those who are from the Law are heirs,***

that is, if those who are from the Law or under the Law are heirs by the Law,

Romans 4:14b ***faith has been nullified, the promise abolished.***

It is clear that if the inheritance is from the Law, the promise that was made to Abraham on the basis of faith becomes void. But the promise was not made through the Law; rather, the inheritance is through the righteousness of faith. For the Apostle shows what evil there is in hoping for an inheritance from the Law.

Romans 4:15a ***For the law produces wrath.***

To show completely that a person cannot be justified by the law before God, nor could the promise have been made through the law, Paul says: *The law produces wrath*; for it was given for this purpose, that it might make transgressors guilty. Faith, however, is the gift of God's mercy, so that those who have been made guilty through the law may obtain pardon; therefore faith produces joy. Nor does he speak against the law, but he sets faith before it; because those who could not be saved through the law are saved by the grace of God through faith. Therefore the law is not wrath, but it produces wrath for the sinner, that is, punishment; since it does not forgive, but avenges. For punishment is generated by wrath, and wrath arises from sin; and therefore he wants the law to be set aside, so that one may flee to faith, which forgives sins, in order to save.

Romans 4:15b ***For where there is no law, there is no transgression.***

Paul says this because, once the guilty are removed from the power of the law and pardon is given, there is no transgression; for those who through transgression of the law had been sinners

are justified. For the law of deeds ceases, that is, the observance of Sabbaths, new moons, circumcision, distinction of foods, observance concerning a dead animal, or the blood of a weasel.

Romans 4:16a ***Therefore, it is from faith, so that according to grace the promise may be firm for every seed.***

The promise cannot be firm for every seed, that is, for every human being from every nation, unless it is from faith; because the origin of the promise is from faith, not from the law; for those who are under the law are guilty: but a promise cannot be given to the guilty; and so they must first be purified through faith, so that they may become worthy to be called children of God, and the promise may be firm. For if they call themselves children of God while they are guilty, that is, under the law, it is not firm; because the children of God are free from sin. If therefore those who are under the law must be delivered from under the law, so that they may merit receiving the promise, how much more those who are not under the law! It is therefore not advisable for a person to put himself under the law, as though he could more quickly find a remedy for his wound.

Romans 4:16b ***Not only to him who is of the law, but also to him who is of the faith of Abraham.***

This is what he said above: To *every seed*, both to the Jews, who of course came from the law, and to the Gentiles, who follow the faith of Abraham, which he had as a Gentile, so that he might be righteous. For Abraham believed without the law, and therefore is more closely joined to the Gentiles, so that *the promise may be firm* for them, to those who believe in Him in whom he himself believed.

Romans 4:17a ***Who is the father of us all, as it is written: "For I have made you the father of many nations"*** (Gen. 17:4).

By the example from the Law he confirms that Abraham is the father of all, but of those who believe; and therefore that the promise is firm, if for the sake of faith one withdraws from the Law, because the promise of the kingdom of heaven is assigned to the righteous, not to sinners. And those who are under the Law are under sin, because all have sinned, and it is not possible for anyone both to be under the Law and to obtain grace, as he also says to the Galatians: "You are severed from Christ, you who seek to be justified in the Law; you have fallen away from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

Romans 4:17b ***Before him in whom you have believed, God.***

To teach that there is one God of all, he speaks to the Gentiles, saying that Abraham believed in God himself and was justified before him in whom the nations also believe, that they too may be justified, so that there may be no difference between Jew and Greek in faith; for with circumcision and uncircumcision removed, they become one in Christ; because Abraham also believed while uncircumcised and was justified.

Romans 4:17c ***Who gives life to the dead and calls into being the things that do not exist as though they did.***

By this statement he invites the nations to the faith of Abraham; because when he was in uncircumcision, believing God, whose faith is now proclaimed in Christ, he was given life together with his wife. For when they were of worn-out age, the elderly were

renewed in strength, so that he did not doubt that he would have a son by Sarah, whom he knew to be barren, and in whom the flow of feminine nature had already ceased; so that through these events they should not concern themselves either with uncircumcision or circumcision, and should be ready in regard to faith, secure because they believe in him who gives life to the dead, and that no other has this power; and when he wills that what does not exist should come to be, by his will it immediately stands forth. Therefore Abraham, when he was not yet a father, was called the father of many nations and believed, confident in the power of God. And in order that it might be believed that the Father of Christ is the same God in whom Abraham believed, such a sign was given in Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:13), when the promise was restored in the world at the coming of Christ, like the sign that had been given in Abraham and Sarah when the promise was sealed; so that in a similar way bodies made lifeless by old age should generate the holy John, just as Isaac had been born.

Romans 4:18a ***Who against hope believed in hope*** (Gen. 15:5).

It is clear that when Abraham had no hope of producing offspring, he believed God, maintaining faith against hope that he would generate, but knowing that God can do all things.

Romans 4:18b ***That he might become the father of many nations, according to what was said: So shall your seed be*** (Gen. 15:5).

This is in Genesis; for when He showed him the stars of heaven, He said: *So shall your seed be*, and by believing this he was justified. For he believed what seems impossible to the world,

since it does not fall within the order of nature that old men can produce children, and that their offspring can be multiplied in such abundance that it cannot be counted. Therefore faith is precious, because it believes that what one knows or sees will be surpassed in the future: with this hope he consoles himself, because it is God who promises; and it is fitting that more be thought of Him than human weakness can comprehend.

> **<u>Romans 4:19-22</u>** ***And he was not weakened in faith: nor did he consider his own body already dead, since he was nearly a hundred years old, and the dead womb of Sarah. In the promise of God, however, he did not hesitate in unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God: being certain that what He had promised, He is able also to perform; and therefore it was reckoned to him as righteousness.***

This is what Abraham is praised for as worthy of praise; because, though he knew himself to be unable, he strengthened his weakness by faith, so that he might believe himself able through God to do what he knew could not be done by the decrees of the world. Therefore great is the merit with God of the one who, against his own knowledge, believed God, not doubting that He could, as being God, do what he knows, according to the reasoning of the world, cannot be done. For he holds as certain that God is beyond the reasoning of the world; for no one can be said to be limited within that which he created. Therefore such a one is to be rewarded by God, because he attributes more to his Maker than he himself understands. This indeed would be of no value, if all felt alike: but by the unbelief of many, the faith of believers is commended before God. He therefore exhorts the nations to this firmness of faith, that they may receive the promise and grace of God without any uncertainty, confident in the example of

Abraham, because praise increases for the believer if what is incredible and seems foolish to the world is believed; for the more impossible what is believed is thought to be, the more honorable the believer will be: and yet it would truly be foolish to believe this, if it were said to happen without God. And therefore the faith of Abraham is so much more praiseworthy than the faith of others; because it was not drawn by any wonders of signs. But since the world is governed by a fixed law and power, and is ruled in a definite manner by God, while men, because of the love of the flesh and their zeal for reasoning, have neglected God, the Maker of this work; God, in order to remove error and to show Himself Lord of all, willed that it should be proclaimed that He can do and has done what is impossible for the world; so that those who believe this, being separated from those who, puffed up by the reasoning of the world, have neglected God, may be saved, having been made subjects of God's dominion.

> **<u>Romans 4:23-25</u>** ***But it was not written only for him alone, that it was reckoned to him for righteousness*** (Gen. 15:4); ***but also for us, to whom it will be reckoned, if we believe in him who raised Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our sins and rose again for our justification.***

In Abraham he declares a pattern given to Jews and Gentiles, so that by his example we may believe in God, and in Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, and righteousness may be reckoned to us. Though what is believed now differs, faith nonetheless has one and the same gift. This, then, we obtain by what we believe: for by believing that Christ is the Son of God, we are adopted by God as sons; for he could grant nothing greater to believers than that they should be called sons of God, the faithless having been disowned. For we are called sons of God, but they are not even worthy to be

called servants. For in his infinite magnificence God has granted this to those who love him, something worthy of his own majesty, not something that men deserve; because in a gift the greatness of the giver is considered far more than that of the recipient, and from this he gains greater praise, when through Christ he bestows great gifts upon little ones; Christ who, for our sake, allowed himself to be put to death, so that, pardon having been given, he might rescue us from the second death, that is, from the punishment of hell [*inferni*]; and he rose again, so that through the joy of the triumph over conquered death he might grant us the grace of justification, that we might be worthy to be called sons of God. For before the Passion, those who were baptized received only the remission of those sins for whose sake Satan, in his zeal, put the Savior to death; but after the Resurrection, both those who were baptized earlier and those who were baptized later were all justified through the given pattern of faith in the Trinity, and by receiving the Holy Spirit, who is the sign of believers that they are sons of God. And in order that it might profit us as the fullness of justification, by rising he gave authority to his own precepts; so that, by matching their merits, we may increase ourselves through those by which, having obtained glory, we may appear radiant in the kingdom of God, with this confidence by which, having been justified, we cannot be held by death. For through the Passion of the Savior, death was overcome, which formerly, by reason of sin, held dominion, and it does not dare to hold those justified by him.

Chapter 5

Romans 5:1 ***Therefore, being justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

It is faith, not the law, that makes us have peace with God; for it reconciles us to God by removing the sins that had made us his enemies. And since the Lord Jesus is the minister of this grace, through him we have been made at peace with God. For faith is greater than the law: the law is ours, but faith is God's; and the law concerns present discipline, whereas faith concerns eternal salvation. But whoever does not think about Christ as he ought will not be able to attain the rewards of faith, because he does not hold to the truth of faith.

Romans 5:2 ***Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we glory in the hope of the glory of the children of God.***

It is evident that through Christ we have entry to the grace of God; for he is the mediator of God and men, who, raising us up by his teaching, has caused us to hope for the gift of God's grace, standing in faith in him. We stand, therefore, because previously we lay low; but believing, we have been raised up, rejoicing in the hope of the brightness which God has promised to us.

Romans 5:3a ***Not only this, but we also glory in our tribulations.***

Since through tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:21), therefore he teaches that we must also glory in them. When tribulation is added to hope, it increases the reward; for tribulation is the proof of steadfast hope, bearing witness toward the crown. Therefore the Lord says: Blessed are you when they persecute you and speak all manner of evil against you because of the righteousness of God. Rejoice and be glad; for behold, your reward is abundant in heaven (Matt. 5:11). For to despise present things, and those that bring delight, and not to yield under pressure

because of the hope of future things, is of great merit before God. Therefore we must glory in tribulations, because a person believes he will receive so much the more, the stronger he has shown himself in tribulation.

Romans 5:3b ***Knowing that tribulation works patience.***

This is what it means *that tribulation works patience*: if tribulation itself does not suffer any movement of weakness or doubt.

Romans 5:4a ***Patience, however, brings about proving.***

It is clear that patience, if it is of the kind we have described, will appear as firm proof.

Romans 5:4b ***Proof, however, brings about hope.***

Hope in the one who appears proven is not said without reason; for he will be known as worthy, about to receive his reward in the kingdom of God.

Romans 5:5 ***But hope does not put us to shame; because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.***

Hope is not mistaken, even while we are judged by the faithless as foolish and dull, for believing things worldly reason cannot grasp; for we have as a pledge of God's love within us *the Holy Spirit given to us*. The Holy Spirit, given to the apostles and to us, proves that the promise of God is trustworthy, since he granted that the unlearned should speak in various languages with

interpretations to confirm hope, and therefore praise the love of God within us (Acts 2:4); so that, because it is impossible for those who are dear to be deceived, he might make us secure concerning the promise: for it is God who has promised; and he has promised it to those whom he wills to have as his beloved. For human words are not able to assert the reason of our faith unless supported by the testimony of virtues, which, though silent, cry out, and are approved as rational to the confusion of the wise of this world: who, with boldness of speech, fight with earthly weapons against heavenly things, and with carnal weapons against spiritual things, and are not ashamed to call themselves wise. For just as the origin of a foreigner, a man of no repute, is doubtful in a strange land; so too the truth of our faith dwells as a stranger upon the earth: and because its nature cannot be explained in words, it is praised by the testimony of virtue, which is the greater thing.

> **Romans 5:6-7** ***For why indeed did Christ, while we were still sinners, at the appointed time die for the ungodly? For scarcely does anyone die for a righteous person; for a good person perhaps someone might dare to die.***

If for unbelievers and those hostile to God Christ gave himself over to death for a time, for he died for a time, because on the third day he rose again, how much more, when we believe in him, will he fortify us with his help? For this is why he died for us: that he might obtain both life and glory for us. Therefore, if he died for his enemies, it must be understood how much more he does for his friends. Among human beings, that is, according to time, he seemed to die; for he, in the realm of the dead, was judging irreverent and wicked spirits for the salvation of souls. There are times in the world, where the sun rises and sets, and the moon increases and decreases, and day and night do not remain in their state; for whatever is subject to time and age is always changeable.

To this time, then, Christ died, when he departed from the body. But where there is neither time nor age, there he is found not only alive, but also victorious. From this he wished to praise the Savior's love toward us, when he says: "*Scarcely does anyone die for a righteous person;* but Christ died *for the ungodly*." For if scarcely anyone dies for a righteous person, how can it be that someone dies for the ungodly? And if for a single good person someone perhaps dares to die, or perhaps does not dare, because he indicates that both possibilities are difficult; how can it be thought that someone would dare to die for the wickedness of many? For even if someone, moved by a certain compassion or the attraction of his good works, perhaps dares to die for a righteous or good person, in the case of the ungodly there is not only nothing to persuade one to die, but nothing even to move one to tears. But Christ died for the sins of the people, and not yet for his own, so that he might make all things credible which the world doubts. Therefore he made two degrees, that of the righteous and that of the good: for although the righteous person is also to be called good, still he set forth the categories themselves, indicating the righteous by practice, but the good by nature, one who is called innocent in his simplicity. Therefore, although, as far as this passage is concerned, the righteous is of greater merit than the good, yet he says: "*For a good person, perhaps someone might dare to die*"; so that, because the cause of innocence is more pitiable, he suggests that for this someone might perhaps be compelled. Indeed parents wish to die for good children, not to say wives for good husbands. For if we wish to set up a comparison between the good and the righteous, sometimes we discover that the righteous is better, sometimes that the good is to be preferred. For if according to God's law someone who is righteous is better than the good, it is better than that kind of good person who has not yet labored with himself to increase his good qualities; for by training, the righteous will improve the goodness of his nature. But if someone is righteous according to the world, the good

person is preferred to him because of innocence, since such righteousness is not without severity. Therefore every nature is good, while righteousness according to God's law is a fruit fitting to nature; and so righteousness is goodness, where the righteous are always also called good. Yet the good are not always righteous, because they are not called good on account of works, but on account of innocence; for righteousness is perfect goodness when it carries out, in deed, the good proper to its nature.

Romans 5:8 ***But God praises His love in us.***

Therefore He praises His love, while He is still generous toward His enemies and sends One who will save them, even though they certainly do not deserve it.

Romans 5:9 ***For if, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us, much more now, being justified by his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him.***

Paul says this because, if God allowed his Son to be put to death for sinners, what will he do for the justified, except keep them from wrath, that is, make them safe from the Devil's deceit, so that they may be secure on the day of judgment, when vengeance begins to lay waste the faithless? For since the goodness of God wills that none should perish, he has granted a most worthy death, so that, to those who recognize God's grace toward them, he might add honor and glory, and upon the ungrateful heap up punishment. The ungrateful are those who, when God calls, refuse, denying God's grace so that they remain fixed in their error and wickedness.

Romans 5:10 ***For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.***

It is clear that if, in order to reconcile us to Himself, God handed over His Son to death, how much more, now that we are reconciled, will He save us by His life? For He cannot fail to love His friends, He who benefits His enemies. If the death of the Savior helped us while we were still ungodly, how much more will His life justify us, now that He has risen from the dead? For just as His death has snatched us from the Devil, so His life will deliver us from the day of God's judgment.

Romans 5:11 ***Not only this, but we also glory in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.***

Paul teaches not only that thanks are to be given to God for the salvation and safety received, but also that we are to glory in God through Christ Jesus, who has agreed that we, once ungodly and enemies, should be called his friends; so that, having obtained all benefits through Christ, we may rejoice: and because through him we have come to know God, as we glory in him, we may render to him honor equal to God the Father, he himself bearing suitable witness and proclaiming: "That all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father" (Jn. 5:23). Therefore, after the providence of God the Father and the gift which he gave through Christ, to make the person of the Son pleasing to us, since through the one Christ we have been redeemed by the one God the Father, he added:

<u>Romans 5:12</u> ***Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin, death; so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned in him.***

Since above Paul has shown the grace of God given through Christ according to the order of truth, he now sets forth the very order of the one God the Father, through the one Christ His Son, so that, because Adam, one, that is, Eve, for she too is Adam, sinned in all, so one Christ, the Son of God, conquered sin in all. And because he has shown the purpose of God's grace toward the human race, he begins from Adam to show the very beginnings of sin, because he was the first who sinned, so that he might teach that the providence of the one God has restored, through one, what through one had fallen and been drawn into death. This, then, is the one through whom we are saved; to him, by God the Father's will, that reverence is given which we owe to the Father Himself. For the same one says in another place: He who serves Christ in these things pleases God (Rom. 14:18); though it is written: The Lord your God you shall adore, and Him only shall you serve (Deut. 6:13). If, therefore, he says that only God is to be served, and yet commands that Christ be served, Christ is in the unity of God, and is neither inferior nor another God; since, when the Law says that only God is to be served, it is proclaimed that one who serves Christ together with God is pleasing to God. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin death, so also through one Christ there came the condemnation and death of sin, granting eternal life, as he explains below.

In whom, that is, in Adam, *all have sinned*. Paul therefore said "in whom," though he is speaking of the woman, because he did not refer it to the individual, but to the race. Therefore it is clear that in Adam all sinned as though in the lump; for he himself, having been corrupted by sin, all whom he begot were born under sin. From him, then, all are sinners, because from him himself we all derive; for he lost the favor of God when he transgressed,

becoming unworthy to eat of the tree of life, so that he should die. Now death is the termination of the body, when the soul is separated from the body. There is also another death, which is called the second, in Gehenna, which we do not suffer by Adam's sin, but, on the occasion of it, is acquired by our own sins: from this the good are free, only that they were in hell [*inferno*], but in the upper part, as if in a place of liberty, since they could not ascend to heaven; for they were held by the sentence given in Adam, which handwriting in the decrees was blotted out by the death of Christ (Col. 2:14). Now the sentence of the decree was that the body of one man should be dissolved upon the earth, while his soul, held by the bonds of hell [*inferni*], should suffer destruction.

Romans 5:13 ***For until the Law, sin was in this world; but sin was not charged when there was no Law.***

Paul says that in Adam all sinned, as I mentioned above, and that until the Law was given sin was not charged; for people thought they could sin against God with freedom, though not against other people. For the natural law had not been completely numbed; they were not ignorant that what they did not want to suffer, they should not do to others. Indeed, sin was so far from unknown among humans that when Jacob, having idols, was searched by his father-in-law Laban, he judged that whoever was found with the stolen goods was worthy of death (Gen. 31:30ff.); and Joseph, though falsely accused, was nevertheless shut up in prison as though guilty (Gen. 39:20); and Pharaoh's baker and cupbearer likewise suffered on account of their offence (Gen. 40:3); and Moses, after killing the Egyptian, was frightened by the law (Exod. 2:12). How, then, was sin not charged when there was no Law? Or how was it punished, unless the Law was known?

The natural law always exists, nor was it ever entirely unknown; but it was thought to have authority only for a time, and not to make people guilty before God. For it was unknown that God would judge the human race, and therefore sin was not charged, as though sin were not known to God, while they asserted that God was unconcerned. But when the Law was given through Moses, it was made clear that God cares about human affairs, and that those who do evil will not go unpunished, whatever the cause by which they escape for the present. For certainly, if among themselves, under the teaching of justice or nature, they did not consider sins unavenged, how much more should they not have been ignorant that God, whom they knew as the maker of the world, would require these things? Since Sodom and Gomorrah were sentenced to perish by fire (Gen. 19:24), which had indeed been covered over by forgetfulness; Moses, however, in writing, made it clear, to strengthen the belief that God would be judge. But when, passing over God, they began to adopt figments in honor of God, having become depraved in mind, they trampled on part of the natural law, which is the first part. For the natural law has three parts, the first of which is this: that the Creator, once recognized, should be honored, and that his glory and majesty should not be attributed to any of the creatures. The second part is moral, that is, that one should live well, governed by modesty; for it is fitting for a human being who has knowledge of the Creator to restrain his life by law, lest that knowledge be rendered futile. The third part is instructive, that the knowledge of God the Creator and the example of moral conduct be handed on to others, so that they may learn how merit is placed before the Creator. This is true and Christian wisdom.

Romans 5:14a ***But death reigned from Adam until Moses.***

For sin was not charged before the Law was given through Moses, as I have said; by the very liberty of this violation death reigned,

knowing that those men were devoted to it. Therefore death reigned with the security of its dominion both over those who escaped for a time, and over those who even here paid the penalties for their evil deeds. For it saw that all were its own; for "whoever commits sin is the servant of sin" (Jn. 8:34). Thinking they could yield with freedom, they sinned all the more, especially in those sins to which they were more inclined, which the world fostered as though they were lawful. Over this Satan rejoiced, being confident that, because of Adam's case, man left by God was in his possession.

Romans 5:14b So then death reigned over those ***who sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression***,

who is a pattern of the future; this we shall show in what follows. Therefore it is clear that death did not reign over all, because not all sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression, that is, not all sinned by despising God. And who are they who sinned by despising God, if not those who, neglecting the Creator, served the creature, setting up gods for themselves to worship, to the injury of God? For this reason the Devil rejoiced in such men, because he saw that they had become his imitators. For both Terah (Jos. 24:2), the father of Abraham, and Nahor and Laban (Gen. 31:19, 31:30) claimed their own gods for themselves. And Adam's sin is not far from idolatry; for he transgressed, thinking that as a man he would become God. He judged that what the Devil suggested would benefit him more than what God commanded, setting the Devil in the place of God; and therefore he became subject to the Devil. In like manner these men, having transgressed against God, while they serve the creature, sin in a similar way, though not in the same way; for a likeness usually has some difference. Nor indeed can it be said that those who received the command not to eat of the tree, as Adam did (Gen. 2:16), are the same as those who

sinned, who did not transgress a positive command of God, but the law of nature. Whoever understood, whether by transmission or by natural indication, and worshiped God, imparting to no one else the honor of His name and majesty, if such a one sinned, since it is impossible not to sin, he sinned under God, not against God, whom he felt to be his Judge; and therefore in such a man death did not reign. But, as I said, it reigned over those who, under the guise of idols, served the Devil. Because the Law had not been decreed with authority, they were unable to apprehend God as Judge. For the greater part of the world did not know that God would be Judge; but the very few in whom death did not reign, in those in whom it did reign, after this death, which is called the first, are excepted for the second, unto future punishment and destruction. But in those in whom it did not reign, because they did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression, they were kept in hope for the coming of the Savior into freedom; as we read of Abraham, that although he was in hell [*inferos*], he was nevertheless separated by a great interval, so that there was an immense chasm between the righteous and the sinners (Luke 16:26). If there was an immense chasm between the righteous and the sinners, how much greater between the godless, so that the righteous might have refreshment, and the sinners torment, and the wicked burning; so that before the judgment it might not be hidden what each one was worthy of. And therefore death reigned over them, because it saw that the works of its subtlety had advanced them to punishment as though they were its enemies. For it was not hidden from it that man was made in the world for this purpose, that he might proclaim the rule of the one God, which Satan had transgressed.

And if in the Greek text it is not stated so carefully, it is written therefore: that death also reigned over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression. Here it seems to embrace everything, so that, since death, that is, termination, came about

through the envy of the Devil, he says that death reigned even over those who did not sin, for they die, which is what Satan desires. If this were true, it should not have been said: "*Death reigned from Adam until Moses*," if from the beginning until the end it reigns over all. Or perhaps he made stages, so that it reigned from Adam until Moses, and from Moses until Christ, and from Christ until the end; but to what purpose would such a way of speaking serve, since he is not found to have spoken so? For he said: "From Adam death reigned until Moses," because the Law had not yet been revealed, so that, once the Law was given, they might live under its authority, knowing what to avoid lest death should reign over them. Therefore, can it be said that death reigned over the man who, before the Law, by nature's guidance, observed what the Law later commanded? Consider what is written about this: "Sin," he says, "was not charged when there was no Law"; and he added: "But death reigned from Adam until Moses", of course in that time when there was no Law; and it is fitting that, because death reigned before the Law was given, it should be said to have reigned over those who sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression, as we mentioned above. For just as, after the Law was given, death reigned over those who served idols or fornication, despising the lawgiver, so also before the Law it did not by any means reign over those who anticipated the sense of the Law, honoring its Author. For it is said to have reigned because knowledge of the one God had vanished from the earth. Indeed, the Law began in this way: "I am," he says, "the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods besides me; and you shall not make for yourself an idol nor any likeness" (Exod. 20:2). Therefore the Law was given so that death might not reign; that, sins of former times being abolished, the human race might obey the one God. Therefore in another place the same Apostle says: "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it" (Rom. 6:12). By this statement he shows that even now death reigns, if the Law

is despised. For what is the reign of death, if not when its will is done, while it commands, to the destruction of the one who obeys, whose ruling will is the very head of idolatry?

And yet it is prescribed to us from the Greek manuscripts as if they did not differ among themselves, which is caused by the zeal of conflict. For since a person cannot use his own authority in order to win, he falsifies the words of the law, so that he may assert his own meaning as though it were the words of the law, and it appears that not reason but authority lays down the rule. Moreover, it is well known that certain ancient Latin manuscripts were translated from old Greek ones, which the simplicity of earlier times has preserved and attests as uncorrupted. But after minds departed from unity and, with heretics causing disturbances, began to be racked by disputes, many things were altered according to human understanding, so that what seemed right to man should be contained in the text; where even the Greeks themselves have different manuscripts. I judge this to be true, since reason, history, and authority all bear it out: for even today, in Latin manuscripts that are criticized, they are found set down as in the writings of the ancients, Tertullian, Victorinus, and Cyprian.

So then, the kingdom of death first began to be destroyed in Judea, because God is known in Judea (Ps. 75:2); but now it is destroyed day by day among all nations, while to a great extent the children of the Devil become children of God. And therefore death did not reign over all, but over those who sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression, as I mentioned above. Now Adam is the type of the one to come for this reason: because God had already then decreed in mystery to correct through the one Christ what had been sin through the one Adam, as it is said in the Apocalypse of John the Apostle: "The Lamb," he says, "who was slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Finally, he added:

Romans 5:15a ***But the gift is not like the trespass.***

For when Paul said that the form of the one Christ is the one Adam, he did this so that the cause of Adam should not be thought to be of the same kind as that of Christ. Therefore he says: *But the gift is not like the trespass*; because Adam is a figure of Christ only in this respect, that as one sinned, so one corrected it.

Romans 5:15b ***For if by the trespass of one many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift in the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to many.***

That is, if by the trespass of one many died by imitating his transgression, much more did the grace of God and the gift overflow to many who flee to him. For more obtain grace than died by Adam's trespass. From this it is clear that he did not mean this death which is common to all; because all without exception die, and yet not all obtain grace. Nor is it said that death reigned over all, but over those who died through Adam's trespass, those whom he says sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression. These are those whom he calls "*many dead through the trespass of one*," but the grace of God overflowed to more; because in those who are said to have died by Adam's trespass, sinning in like manner, and in those who did not sin in this likeness of Adam's transgression, the grace of God overflowed. And though by the father's sin, according to God's judgment, they were in the underworld (*inferos*), the grace of God overflowed in the descent of the Savior, granting pardon to all, and, with triumph, lifting them up into heaven. (1 Peter 3:18-20)

Romans 5:16 ***And not as with the one sin, so also is the gift: for the judgment indeed came from one unto***

condemnation, but the gift from many offenses unto justification.

It is clearly different, because by the one sin of Adam those who sinned in the likeness of his transgression were condemned; but the grace of God through Christ has justified human beings not from one offense, but from many, by granting them the remission of sins. This is spoken to the greatness of the mercy of God and of Christ; so that, although through Adam's offense many are held by the second death in the lower hell (*inferno*), yet the gift of God's grace, when it would have been just for them to be punished, not only pardons them, but justifies them.

Romans 5:17 ***For if by the offense of one man death reigned through one, much more shall those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift and of righteousness reign in life through the one Jesus Christ.***

It must be noted that there is one and the same meaning, and that in no way does it differ: for Paul says that death has reigned, not that it is reigning; because those who understood God's judgment through the Law have been lifted out from under its dominion. But it did reign, because without the revealing of the Law, the fear of God was not upon the earth. The earlier sense, therefore, is that because death reigned from Adam to Moses over those who sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression, much more does grace reign, in the abundance of God's gift, unto life through the one Jesus Christ. For if death reigned, why should not grace reign much more, which justifies far more people than those in whom death reigned? How much more must grace be believed to reign, which bestows life through Christ?

Romans 5:18 ***Therefore, just as through the transgression of one man condemnation came upon all men, so also through the righteousness of one man justification of life came upon all men:***

That is, just as through the transgression of one man all deserved condemnation by sinning in like manner, so also in the righteousness of one man all who believe will be justified. But if some think that this condemnation is universal, in the same way they will take the justification to be universal. Yet this is not true, because not all believe.

Romans 5:19 ***For just as through the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one man many will be made righteous.***

Those whom Paul previously called "all," he here designates as "*many*"; for more people followed Adam's offense by transgression, but not all; and many will be made righteous through faith in Christ, but not all. Therefore death did not reign over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression.

Romans 5:20a ***But the Law came in so that the offense might increase.***

One might say conversely: Therefore the Law ought not to have been given, lest sins grow; for if before the Law there was less sin, there was no need of the Law. The Law was indeed necessary, so that it might show that sins are counted before God, which were believed to be committed with immunity; so that thereafter people would know what they ought to avoid. Therefore the prophet Isaiah says: "The Law," he says, "was given as a help" (Isa. 8:20); because certain seeds of justice are in some manner implanted in

nature itself, the Law was added so that, by its authority and teaching, the natural disposition might advance to produce the fruit of righteousness. For just as birth perishes unless it has nourishment by which, being sustained, it may grow, so also the natural disposition toward justice, unless it has something to look up to and venerate, does not easily flourish, but falls sick and yields to sins when they come. For by the habit of sinning it is pressed down so that it does not grow into fruit, and thereby it is extinguished. Therefore the Law was providentially given as a help, as the prophet bears witness; but the people, following their old habit, multiplied sins. For by practice they began to sin more than they had sinned before; and therefore it came to pass that, when the Law was given, sins were not diminished but increased. The Apostle shows what resulted from the giving of the Law, not what the Law itself did. But how was it by fault of the Law that sins increased, when the Law threatened punishment so that people might not sin; and yet it is said to have come in so that sin might abound? It is true, because it entered, as it were, as something that would be helpful, and with humility; but afterwards it began to rule over those to whom it had commanded not to sin, and they did sin. For the Law began to reveal the abundance of sins, since the very things it had forbidden were done more than they had been done before. Therefore, in this way the Law was given so that the offense might increase; for as the Apostle praises faith, through which sins are indeed wiped out, he said that the Law caused sin to abound, as I said above; because it was not given so that sins might be abolished, but so that they might abound: since it showed people to be sinners before the Law, and after the Law it held all guilty.

<u>Romans 5:20b</u> ***But where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more.***

It is clear that when *sin abounded, grace abounded all the more*: when the gift of God came from the promise and covered the sins of all, so that the Devil might grieve that through his envy he had accomplished nothing. For when the Law had been given for human benefit, the Devil worked to overturn it by persuading people to unlawful deeds, so that what had been given to be helpful would in fact work in the opposite way, since the commandments were despised, and from the Law there proceeded not benefit but judgment unto vengeance. Then the just and merciful God, in order to empty the glory of the Devil which he had sought from his triumph over man, decreed that His Son should come, who would forgive all sins, so that the joy arising from the gift of grace might be greater than the sorrow that had arisen from sin. For the joy of God's gift also benefits those over whom Satan could not triumph; therefore grace abounded beyond the sin which Satan had prompted.

Romans 5:21 ***As sin reigned unto death, so also let grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

Sin reigned as it saw its work in sinners advancing toward death, in which it gloried; in like manner *let grace also reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*, so that just as, through Adam, sin began to reign, so also, through Christ, grace. And grace reigns through righteousness if, having received the forgiveness of sins, we follow after righteousness; so that, seeing that it has fruit in the good whom it has redeemed, grace may reign unto eternal life, knowing that we shall be eternal. Grace therefore abounds, because sin reigned for a time, but grace forever. For it is God's kingdom when grace reigns, just as it was the Devil's kingdom when sin reigned. Yet he refers everything to

Christ, so that all the grace of God may be learned from Christ. He therefore answers according to the foregoing sense, saying:

Chapter 6

Romans 6:1 ***What then shall we say? Shall we remain in sin so that grace may abound? Far from it.***

That is, must we always keep sinning so that the gift of God may abound, covering our sins; so that, always hoping for the forgiveness of sins because God is merciful, we might put forward the grace of Christ? Certainly not. For this is precisely why God took pity on us through Christ: so that, from now on, by not sinning, we might cause both merit for ourselves and the grace of God to reign in us. For whoever returns again to the old man, that is, to the pattern of former life, removes the reign of God's grace and hands himself over to sin. For we have received mercy for two reasons: both that the kingdom of the Devil might be driven out, and that God's rule might be proclaimed to those who are ignorant, and by this very thing a dignity might be obtained for us.

Romans 6:2 ***For we who have died to sin, how shall we still live in it?***

Paul says this because, while we were living in sin, we were dead before God; for whoever sins lives to sin, just as whoever does not sin lives to God. For when the grace of God came through Christ, and we, through faith and the regenerating spiritual washing, began to live to God, we became dead to sin, which is the Devil; that is, to die to sin is to be freed from sin and to become a servant of God. Therefore, since we are now dead to sin, let us not return

to our former evils, lest we again live to sin and, dying to God, lose our dignity and fall back into the punishment we had escaped.

Romans 6:3 ***Are you unaware that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death?***

Paul says this so that we may understand that, having been baptized, we ought no longer to sin; for when we are baptized, we die together with Christ. This is what it means to be baptized into his death; for there all our sins die, so that, renewed with death laid aside, we may be seen to rise again to life reborn: so that just as Christ died to sin and rose again, so we too, through baptism, may have the hope of resurrection. Baptism, therefore, is the death of sin, so that another birth may follow, which, with the structure of the body remaining, renews a person in mind, with the oldness of all evil deeds buried.

Romans 6:4 ***For we have been buried together with him through baptism into death; so that just as Christ rose from the dead through the power of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.***

In saying this, Paul also signifies that which is primary: because Christ raised his own body from the dead, for he himself is the power of God the Father, as he says: Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days. But, he says, he was speaking of the temple of his body (Jn. 2:19 and 21); and because he rose into a new life which no longer knows death. It is called new because it is given by Christ, that is, the Christian way of life. We, however, who have been baptized, have been buried with Christ (Col. 2:12) so that from then on we may follow that life in which Christ rose. Baptism, therefore, is the pledge and image of the resurrection; so

that, remaining in the commandments of Christ, we do not again turn back to what is past. For the one who dies no longer sins; for death is the end of sin. Indeed, it is performed with water so that, just as water washes away the stains of the body, so we may believe that through baptism we are spiritually cleansed and renewed from every sin; so that what is incorporeal may be washed away invisibly.

Romans 6:5 ***For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in that of his resurrection.***

Then Paul says that we can happily rise again, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death; that is, if in baptism, having laid aside all vices and been transferred into a new life, we no longer sin thereafter: by this we shall likewise be similar to his resurrection; for the likeness of the death will grant a similar resurrection. This is what the apostle John recalls in his letter, saying: We know that when he appears, we shall be like him (1 Jn. 3:2), that is, to rise immortal and glorious. For this will not be a likeness such that there is no difference at all, since it will be likeness in the glory of the body, not in the nature of the divinity.

Romans 6:6-7 ***Knowing this, because our old man was crucified together with Him, so that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we may no longer serve sin.***

Paul weaves together and repeats many things in order to teach the baptized that they ought no longer to sin, especially that they should not return to idolatry; for it is a most grave crime and the chief of all error, lest they lose the grace received from God through Christ. By “old man” he means past deeds, because just as a new man is so called through faith and a pure life, so the old

man is so called through lack of faith and evil deeds. He says these deeds are crucified, that is, put to death, so that the body of sin, which is all crimes together, may be destroyed. For he calls all sins together a body, which he says is destroyed through a good life and the Catholic faith.

Romans 6:8 ***But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live together with Him.***

It is clear that those who have crucified the flesh, that is, the world with its vices and desires, die to the world and die together with Christ, and are also mystically conformed to eternal life and salvation, so that they may deserve to be made like to the glory of Christ. Now the flesh, that is, the body, is crucified in this way if its desires are trampled underfoot, which, with sin remaining in it, arise from the transgression begun by the first man: for in the flesh the Devil is crucified; for he it is who deceives through the flesh. Therefore sometimes "flesh" means the world, that is, the elements, and sometimes it is understood as the human body, or even the soul itself following bodily vices.

Romans 6:9-10 ***Knowing that Christ, rising again from the dead, now no longer dies; death will no longer have dominion over him. For the death he died, he died to sin once; but the life he lives, he lives to God.***

Paul shows the security of eternity in the resurrection of the Savior, which it is possible to attain if there is striving after a better life. For whoever, by acting rightly, lives to God, truly lives; because he has eternal life.

Romans 6:11 ***So you also must consider yourselves as indeed dead to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

Paul speaks therefore to teach that there is no other way to die to sin and live to God than for all hope to be in Christ; whom he calls our Lord, so that nothing in the Law may be thought to contribute to the attaining of salvation in the age to come, when one can live to God only through Christ.

Romans 6:12 ***Therefore, let not sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its desires.***

The body is mortal because of Adam's transgression, but by faith in Christ it is believed that it will become immortal. Yet, in order to attain this promise, Paul says that we must not obey sin, lest it reign in our mortal body; for it reigns when it commands. But if it does not reign, this body will not be seen as mortal, because it lives in the hope of eternity. He did not call the body mortal on account of bodily termination, but because of the punishment of Gehenna [*gehennæ*]; so that the one is called mortal who is to be sent into Gehenna. For those who obey sin do not escape the second death of hell [*inferni*], from which the Savior has freed those who believe in him. By calling the body mortal, he meant the whole person; for those who obey sin are called mortal. "The soul," he says, "that sins, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4), that is, the whole man, for no one will be judged without the body.

Romans 6:13a ***But do not present your members as weapons of unrighteousness to sin.***

Paul shows that the Devil attacks us with his darts; for an opportunity is given him through our sins, so that when God

abandons us, the Devil, having received power, mocks us and puts us to death. Therefore we must restrain our members from every work of iniquity, so that our enemy, found unarmed, may be subdued. And he did not say: "Present your bodies," but "*your members*"; for it is through the members, as servants, that one goes astray, not through the whole body.

<u>Romans 6:13b</u> ***But present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead.***

By "*dead*" Paul means ignorance and unbelief together with an evil life; for life is to know God through Christ. Since no one receives the origin of life without a parent, and all things have their origin from God unto life through Christ, therefore the one who does not know that God through Christ is the parent of all is not said to have life, that is, he is regarded as if he did not exist: for he denies his own being when he imagines that he exists without God as his parent. Therefore ignorance and shameful living are death; such vices bring upon a person death, not this death which is common to all, but the death of Gehenna [*gehennae*], as I mentioned above; so that the knowledge of God as Father and holy conduct are life, not this life which is subject to decay, but that of the age to come, which is called eternal. Therefore, "present yourselves to God," he says, "through knowing whom you have advanced unto salvation; so that, renouncing a dishonorable life, you may be alive from the dead."

<u>Romans 6:13c</u> ***And let your members be weapons of righteousness for God.***

Such modesty does He wish to govern our conduct with, that our actions, advancing the righteousness of God and not worldly righteousness (for the world's righteousness, being without faith

in Christ, without which there is not life but death), supply Him with weapons to defend us. When we offer Him weapons through good works, we make ourselves worthy to be helped by it; for the righteousness of God looks down on the unworthy. For where the righteousness of God is, there the Holy Spirit dwells to help our weakness. Just as we provide weapons to sin when we act wickedly, so also to righteousness when we live rightly, guarding our members from all shamefulness.

Romans 6:14 ***But sin will no longer rule over you; for you are not under the Law, but under grace.***

If we walk according to the commands that he gives, he declares that sin cannot rule over us; for it rules over those who sin. Indeed, when we walk as he commands, we are not under the Law; but if we do not sin, we are not under the Law, but under grace. If, however, we sin, we come under the Law, and sin will begin to rule over us; for whoever commits sin is the slave of sin (Jn. 8:34); and it is necessary that he be under the Law as long as he has not received forgiveness; for sin, by the authority of the Law, makes the sinner guilty. And therefore, whoever has been granted forgiveness and keeps himself so that he does not sin thereafter, neither will sin rule over him, nor is he under the Law. For the authority of the Law ceases with respect to the one who has been freed from sin; for those whom the Law holds as guilty have been handed over to it by sin. Therefore, the one who is stripped of sins cannot be under the Law.

Romans 6:15 ***What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the Law, but under grace? God forbid.***

Since the Law is from God, and so that it might not somehow seem opposed to Him, Paul sets the question before himself: “If the Law

is from God," he says, "why should we not be under the Law?" This he clarifies, and teaches that in accordance with the will of God, who is the author of the Law, we have been freed by Christ from being under the Law. For although the Law was rightly given (it was given so that it might show as guilty before God those who had sinned before the Law, and so that it might inspire fear, that from this time people might not sin), yet because the human race, through the weakness of its frailty, could not restrain itself from sins, it became liable to the death of hell [*inferni*]. Moved by the compassion of His mercy, by which He always comes to the aid of the human race, God provided through Christ a way by which healing might be given to those already in despair; so that, having received the forgiveness of sins, being delivered from the Law which held them liable, and being lifted up and restored, they might, with God's help through faith, resist the vices by which they had previously been subdued. And therefore we have not sinned as though scorning God's Law, but have rather followed, through Christ, the very providence of God Himself.

Romans 6:16 ***You do not know that to whom you present yourselves as servants to obey, you are servants of the one whom you obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness.***

Now, lest we profess one thing and do another, and, while we are called servants of God, be found by our deeds to be servants of the Devil, he warns and declares that we are servants of the one whose will we fulfill by our works; and it is of no little harm to confess God as Lord, yet in our actions serve the Devil. For God once marks this out and accuses, saying: This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me (Isa. 29:13). And the Lord says in the Gospel: No one can serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). And in the Law it is said: God is not mocked (Gal. 6:7).

<u>Romans 6:17-18</u> ***But thanks be to God that, though you were slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching into which you were delivered. But by believing in Christ, we have been made servants of righteousness.***

For we are called servants of the one whom we obey. And since it is right to obey Christ (for he himself is righteousness, and the things he commands are righteous), therefore Paul says *we have been made servants of righteousness* from the heart, not from the law; from the will, not from fear, so that our profession may be brought forth by the judgment of the mind. For we have been led to faith by nature, not by the law, in that pattern of teaching by the command of God by whom we have been made, who fashioned nature. For in nature we have it that we know by whom, through whom, and in whom we have been created. Therefore the pattern of teaching is that into which the Creator has naturally delivered us, that is, what he said above: "They are a law unto themselves" (Rom. 2:14); since they see that what they believe belongs to their nature; so that what the Law and the Prophets preached to the Jews about Christ, this the Gentiles trust in from the heart. Therefore he gives thanks to the Lord, because when we were slaves of sin, we obeyed from the heart by believing in Christ, so that we might serve God, not through the law of Moses, but through the law of nature.

<u>Romans 6:19a</u> ***I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.***

When Paul mentions the weakness of the flesh, he means that he demands less of a man than is truly fitting in regard to the worship of God. Finally, it is added:

Romans 6:19b ***For just as you presented your members to serve impurity and lawlessness, leading to lawlessness, so now present your members to serve righteousness, leading to sanctification.***

In order to take away from us the occasion of fear in approaching the faith, because it might seem to us almost unbearable and harsh, Paul commanded us to serve God by the same measure according to which we formerly served the Devil: although, of course, God ought to be served more zealously than the Devil, since here salvation is at work, there condemnation. Yet the spiritual physician does not demand more from us, lest, as we fled from the commandments as if they were burdensome, considering our weakness, we should remain in death. Therefore the Lord says: Take my yoke upon you . . . for it is sweet, and my burden is light (Matt. 11:29).

Romans 6:20-21 ***For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. For what fruit did you have then from those things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.***

It is clear that whoever is free from God is a slave of sin; for while he sins, he departs from God and comes under sin. What then are the fruits of sin, in which, having lived and then learning the good life, we are ashamed, because we once lived shamefully? And not only this, but even the customs of the pagans are base and foul, especially that which was conceived in Phrygia, in which, unless some vile person takes part, the rite is mute and religion grows numb! Behold a freedom full of stains and bound in filth, whose work earns a shameful wage: whose end is death. By "*end*" he means the conclusion of life and actions, to which either death or

life succeeds. But in this place death is double, for one passes from death to death.

Romans 6:22 ***Now, having been freed from sin but made servants of God, you have your fruit in sanctification, and the end is eternal life.***

That is, if, having received the forgiveness of sins, we strive to imitate good deeds, we will attain holiness, and our end, that is, our outcome, will be everlasting life; for from this death, which he called an end, we will pass over into the life that has no end.

Romans 6:23a ***For the wages of sin is death.***

Paul calls death the profit of sin, because through sin comes death; and therefore those who from now on keep themselves from sins receive as their reward eternal life, because those who do not sin are strangers to the second death.

Romans 6:23b ***But the grace of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

For just as those who follow sin obtain death, so those who follow the grace of God, that is, the faith of Christ, which forgives sins, will have eternal life; so that they may rejoice to be dissolved for a time, knowing that they will obtain that life which is free from all weariness and has no succession. Holy Simeon, longing for this, asked to be released from here (Luke 2:29), that he might go in peace, that is, into a life that suffers no disturbance. And our Lord attests that this gift has been given to us by God through Christ, so that we may give thanks to God the Father through no one other than His Son.

Chapter 7

Romans 7:1a ***You are not ignorant, brothers; I am speaking to those who know the Law.***

To strengthen their minds in divine teaching, Paul uses the example of human law; so that once more through earthly things he may persuade them of heavenly things, just as God is known from the creation of the world. For since the whole belongs to One, although things are diverse, they are nevertheless in some way similar to one another. The Romans therefore know the law, for they are not barbarians: they have grasped natural justice partly from themselves, partly from the Greeks; for the laws were brought to the Romans from Athens, just as to the Greeks from the Hebrews. For before Moses the Law was not hidden, but there was no order nor authority. He therefore speaks not to those who are ignorant of the law:

Romans 7:1b ***Because the Law rules over a man as long as he lives.***

It is not hidden that the whole life of man is under the law of nature, which was given to the world: this Law is general. Now, however, Paul sets forth another, special law (although it too is general, yet since it is not received by all, it becomes special), through which he wishes to prove his assertion; for he wants to hand on the truth step by step. He therefore says:

Romans 7:2 ***For the woman who is under a husband is, while her husband lives, bound to the law of her husband.***

This law comes from the Gospel, not from Moses, nor from earthly justice. Therefore, learning some things by the guidance of nature and some things from the law of Moses, they were made perfect through the Gospel of Christ. By the following example, therefore, Paul more clearly urges that Christianity is stripped of the law of works, though not of every law; and that it is no longer advantageous to be under the law, lest by returning to the law one nullify the grace of God; for the grace of God has freed man from the law, so that he may serve God in spirit, that is, in mind. For just as a woman, when her husband is dead, is freed from the law of her husband, though not from the law of nature, so also are those who by the grace of God have been freed from the law by which they were held as guilty; so that it is dead to them, and, being joined to Christianity, they are not adulterers. For if the law is still alive among them, they are adulterers, and it will do them no good to be called Christians, because they will be liable to punishment. For he will not be an adulterer against the law, but against the Gospel, who, after the law has died and he is joined to the Gospel, then returns to the law; for the law is said to be dead when the one whom it held as guilty is pardoned by it, the authority of the law having ceased.

> **Romans 7:3** ***But if her husband has died, she is freed from the law of the husband, so that she is not an adulteress if she is joined to another man.***

Once removed from the Law, having received the forgiveness of sins and being joined to the Gospel, they are not adulterers against the Law, because it is dead to them. But if, while keeping the Law, they think they are approaching the Gospel, they will be guilty and adulterers, because with the Law still alive they have joined themselves to faith, and they will be adulterers in both.

Romans 7:4a ***And so, my brothers, you also have been put to death to the Law through the body of Christ.***

For our Savior allowed His body to be crucified by the Devil, knowing that it was for us and against him; therefore he says that through the body of Christ we have been saved. For to die to the Law is to live to God, because the Law rules over sinners. Whoever, then, has his sins forgiven dies to the Law, that is, is set free from the Law. And so through the body of Christ we obtain this benefit; for when the Savior handed over His body, He conquered death and condemned sin. The Devil sinned in Him, because he killed Him though He was innocent and knew nothing at all of sin; for when he tried to defend man as a cause of sin for himself, he was found guilty in Him whom he accused. From this it came about that all who believe in Christ are delivered from the Law, with sin removed; because sin, which is the Devil, having been defeated through the body of Christ, has no authority over those who belong to Him by whom he was overcome. For when He does not sin and is killed as if guilty, He conquered sin by means of sin, that is, He condemned the Devil by the very sin which he committed in Him; and He erased the handwriting that had been decreed because of Adam's sin (Col. 2:14), when He rose from the dead, giving to those who believe in Him such a pattern that they cannot be held by the second death. And therefore we have died to the Law through the body of Christ; for whoever has not died to the Law is guilty, and whoever is guilty cannot escape the second death.

Romans 7:4b ***So that you may belong to another, to Him who rose from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God.***

He says this because we have died to the Law in order that from now on we may be servants of Christ alone; and this will be to

bear fruit for God. For one is gained for God who remains in His grace, worthy of the promised resurrection.

Romans 7:5a ***For when we were in the flesh.***

Since he is in the flesh, that is, in the body, he denies that he is in the flesh; because here "to be *in the flesh*" is said of one who follows something that the Law forbids. Therefore, to be in the flesh is understood in many ways: for every unbeliever is in the flesh, that is, fleshly; and a Christian living under the Law is in the flesh; and one who places his hope in human beings is in the flesh; and one who misunderstands Christ is in the flesh; and if any Christian leads a life of indulgence, he is in the flesh. Yet in this passage we shall understand "to be in the flesh" in this way: before faith we were in the flesh; for we lived under sin, that is, following fleshly perceptions, we were subject to vices and sins. Now the perception of the flesh is not to believe spiritual things, that is, that a virgin gave birth without the involvement of a man, and that a person is born anew from water and the Holy Spirit, and that a soul released from its bond with the flesh rises again in the flesh. Distrusting these things, one is in the flesh; therefore:

Romans 7:5b ***The passions,*** he says, ***of sins, which are shown through the Law, were at work in our members, so that they might bear fruit unto death.***

It is clear that one who does not believe acts under sin, and is dragged captive into spoiling vices, so that he produces fruit for the second death; for death then gains profit when one sins. Yet Paul says that the vices operate in the members, not in the body, lest there be an excuse for those who mistreat the body; for in evil speech the tongue is reproved, in theft the hand is corrected, in deceit the ears are rebuked, and so in other things which, although

they proceed from the heart, as the Lord testifies in the Gospel (Matt. 15:18), are nevertheless carried out in deeds by the ministry of the members. This discussion touches the Jews and those who are called Christians and wish to live under the Law; so that, learning that they are fleshly, they may depart from the Law. Yet he shows that the passions of sins, which he says rule those acting in the flesh, are revealed through the Law, not produced by the Law; for the Law is the indicator of sin, not its mother, making sinners guilty.

Romans 7:6a ***Now, however, we are freed from the Law of death, in which we were held.***

We are freed from the Law when we receive the forgiveness of sins; for it no longer has power over us, since it rules over the faithless and the sinners. *The Law of death* is therefore so called because it punishes the guilty; it puts sinners to death: it is not evil, then, but just. For although what is inflicted by the Law is an evil for those who suffer it, the Law itself is not evil, because it inflicts wrath justly. Therefore it is not evil for sinners, but just; for the good it is spiritual. For who would doubt that it is something spiritual to forbid sinning? But because it could not do this, that is, it could not save man by remitting sins, the law of faith was given, which would free believers from the dominion of the Law, so that those whom the Law held guilty unto death might be able to be restored to life. For to them the Law is a law of death, since it works wrath on account of sin.

Romans 7:6b ***So that we may serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.***

Here Paul is thought to touch on the Law, which indeed he makes inferior by comparison with the law of faith, yet he does not judge

it an enemy. For he says that we are rescued from the law of death so that we may serve the law of faith, which has brought us saving protection, something the old law could not do; lest we should seem to make the benefit of grace empty by serving the old law. The old law is certainly not a name of crime, but of time or age; it has grown old because it has ceased. The law of the spirit is itself the law of faith; because faith is in the mind, and is not learned by works, but is believed in the heart: and the mind itself understands that what it believes belongs to its own nature, and it is not seen with the eyes or touched with the hands; and the gifts that are hoped for are not visible nor earthly, but spiritual. The old law, then, was formed on tablets of stone; but the law of the spirit is written spiritually on the tablets of the heart, so that it may be eternal: the letter of the old law is consumed by age. There is also another interpretation of the law of the spirit: namely, that since the former law forbade evil deeds, but this one, when it declares that one must not sin even in the heart, is called the law of the spirit, so that it may make the whole man spiritual.

Romans 7:7a ***What then shall we say? Is the Law sin? Never.***

Since Paul calls this the law of death, and rejoices that we have been rescued from it, and denies that in it we serve God; lest he should be thought to declare it unjust, he clears this up when he says: *Never*.

Romans 7:7b ***But I would not have known sin except through the Law.***

Therefore the Law is not sin, but the indicator of sin; for it shows both the sins that were hidden and that they would not go unpunished before God. Once this was discovered, man became

guilty; and for this reason he does not seem to give thanks to the Law. For who gladly welcomes the one who announces that punishment hangs over him? He gives thanks, however, for the law of faith; because the one who was made guilty through the law of Moses has been reconciled to God through the law of faith: although that law too is just and good; for it is good to reveal the danger that threatens. Yet he gives greater thanks to the one through whom, being rescued from danger, he lives.

Romans 7:7c ***For I did not know desire, except that the Law said in Exodus: You shall not covet*** (Exod. 20:17).

Paul did not distinguish this desire from sin, but blended them, signifying this: that since there was not even the suspicion that such a thing was not permitted before God, I learned, he says, that it is sin. Under his own person he pleads, as it were, a general case. Therefore the Law forbids desire which, because it is a delight, was not thought to be sin. For the matter seemed simple: to desire something belonging to one's neighbor; but the Law revealed that this is sin. For to worldly men nothing seems so unavenged and so pleasant as pleasure.

Romans 7:8a ***Therefore, when the opportunity was taken, sin, through the commandment, produced in me every desire.***

By saying "*every desire*," Paul signifies all sins. For above he mentions desire according to the Law, and now, by adding the other vices, he says that every desire was produced in man by the impulse of the Devil, whom he signifies in the word "*sin*"; so that the Law, which was given to be beneficial, turned into the opposite for man. For when the Devil saw that help had been provided for man through the Law, man whom he rejoiced to have in his

condition both on account of Adam's sin and on account of the man's own, he understood that what had been done was against him. When he saw that man had been placed under the Law, he knew for sure that his own dominion had been taken away; for man had recognized how he might escape the punishment of hell [*inferni*]. From this his anger blazed up against man, so that he might overturn the Law for him; that, by committing what was forbidden, he might again offend God and once more fall into the power of the Devil. He began not to command, but to deceive subtly; for when the Law was given, the Devil lost his dominion, knowing that from then on man belonged to God's judgment.

Romans 7:8b ***For without the Law sin was dead.***

This must be understood in a twofold way, so that you may know that the Devil is signified in "*sin*," and also sin itself, which is called sin. For the Devil is said to have been dead, because he ceased from deceiving man before the Law, but was as if quiet; for he was secure about his possession of him. But he said that sin was dead, because it was thought that it was not credited before God; therefore it was dead in the eyes of man, as though one sinned with freedom. For sin was not hiding, as I said above; but it was unknown in this respect, that God was going to be the Judge. When the Law was given, it became clear that sin had come back to life. Why did it come back to life, if not because it had lived before, and afterwards, through the neglect of men, was considered dead when it was alive? For it was thought that sin was not credited, when in fact it was credited. Therefore, what was living was regarded as dead.

Romans 7:9a ***But I myself once lived without the Law.***

What does "*without the Law*" mean, since the Law has always existed, as I mentioned above, except that man lived without the fear of God, secure in the belief that God would not judge human actions.

Romans 7:9b ***But when the commandment came, sin came back to life.***

Paul therefore said that sin "*came back to life*" to show that it had previously lived; afterward, however, through human negligence it was considered dead, though it was alive, just as false rumor commonly arises about those who are far away. This means that in the beginning sin was not hidden from being reckoned before God, that is, it lived; but when the habit of sinning had blurred this, it was thought dead, so that the crime was believed to cease together with the person. But when the Law was given or renewed, it came back to life among those by whom it had been considered dead; for they began to know that sin was being reckoned.

Romans 7:10a ***But I myself have died.***

Man is dead, because he sees that he is guilty before God, when previously he thought that he would not be liable for the things he was sinning in.

Romans 7:10b ***And I discovered that the commandment, which had been given for life, is in fact unto death.***

It is true that the Law was given for life; but when it made man guilty of sin not only in regard to the past but also to the future, the Law that was *given for life* came to be *unto death*, but, as I said, for the one who sins; for those who obey, it leads to life.

Romans 7:11 ***For sin, having taken the opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.***

In this place understand "*sin*" as the Devil, who is the author of sin. He found an opportunity through the law to satisfy his cruelty by the killing of man: so that, because the Law threatens sinners, man, always committing what is forbidden under his impulse, by offending God would experience the Law's vengeance; and so would be condemned by that which had been given to benefit him. For since the Law was given against his will, envy flared up in him against man, so that he might stain him even more with corrupt pleasures, lest he escape his grasp.

Romans 7:12 ***And so the Law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.***

In order that no hostile suspicion should remain against the Law, Paul praises it in such a way that he declares it not only *just*, but also *holy and good*. For the Gospel discourse bears witness that by "*commandment*" *the Law* is to be understood. For it says: If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments (Matt. 19:17).

Romans 7:13a ***Therefore, is that which is good death to me? Far from it.***

Truly *far from it*; for how could that which is proven to be good be understood as death?

Romans 7:13b ***But in order that sin might appear as sin, it worked death in me through what is good.***

Paul is saying that the Devil, through what is good, took the opportunity to work evil against man, as he seduced him to death; because the Law was given and revealed in written letters so that the things done badly before the Law might be shown, through the enticement of desire, to be sins, and thereafter be avoided. Then Satan was inflamed, indeed through what is good; for he saw that requirement was being made for man, and he urged him toward unlawful things, so that from the Law, which was given for life, death might result for him. This, however, must be credited to human negligence, which so weakened the vigor of its nature through the desire to sin that it could not restrain the suggestions of the adversary. Yet the enemy, whom he implies in sin so that he may be seen to be an enemy, took from the Law the opportunity to work death for man. For as he urged him toward unlawful things, he appears as an enemy. Although even before the Law he had acquired death for man, apart from the first cause in Adam, yet after the Law he created heavier punishments for him in the underworld [*inferos*], where the second death is. For it is a lesser offense to have sinned before the Law was revealed than after the Law.

Romans 7:13c ***So that sin might become, beyond measure, sinning through the commandment*** (Gen. 15:16).

What does "*beyond measure*" mean, as if some measure were given to wrongdoers, when it is never permitted to sin? But these are God's words, saying: "The sins of the Amorites are not yet complete" (Gen. 15:16). By this he shows that there is a certain measure of offenses, and when sinners have filled it up, they are judged utterly unworthy of life; just as in the case of Pharaoh,

because he had filled up this measure, God's powers and signs were shown in him, by which others, terrified, might apply themselves to what leads to life, that life might be learned from the one who died. But there is another measure that the Apostle is discussing; for in order to show that sin under the Law is more than it was before the Law, he indicates that beyond this measure of sins, a greater measure has increased after the Law through the envy and cunning of Satan; so that the providence of God might be turned against man, when under the fear of the Law he ought by no means to have sinned. Therefore God, so that he might overcome the envy of the Devil and confirm his providence toward man, changed the order, sending the Savior Christ, who would both conquer the Devil and establish God's decrees concerning man.

Romans 7:14a ***For we know that the Law is spiritual.***

Since Paul speaks to those who know the Law, he therefore says: *We know that the Law is spiritual;* for they would not place themselves under the Law unless they recognized that it is spiritual. He calls the Law of Moses spiritual, the Law that was given on tablets: because it forbids sin, it is spiritual, since it forbids the worship of visible and carnal things. These remarks serve to praise the Law, lest someone perhaps think it worthy of blame, because it exercised severity against sinners.

Romans 7:14b ***But I am carnal, sold under sin.***

Paul calls a man carnal when he sins. *Sold under sin*. This is to be sold under sin, to draw one's origin from Adam, who first sinned, and to become subject to sin by one's own fault, as the prophet Isaiah says: You have been sold, he says, by your sins (Isa. 50:1). For Adam first sold himself, and therefore all his seed is subject

to sin. Therefore man is weak for keeping the precepts of the Law unless he is fortified by divine help; from this it is that he says: *The Law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin*. That is, the Law is firm and just and free from blame, but man is frail and is enslaved by his father's or his own fault, so that he cannot exercise control over himself with regard to obedience to the Law. Therefore we must flee to the mercy of God, that we may escape the severity of the Law, and, being relieved of our sins, may thereafter, with God's favor, resist the enemy. For what does it mean to be subject to sin, if not to have a body corrupted by the fault of the soul, into which sin inserts itself and drives man, as though captive, into sins, so that he does its will? Therefore the Lord, among other things, says: The Devil comes and takes away what has been sown in their heart, so that they may not be saved (Luke 8:12). From this the same Apostle says in another letter: Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12), who are known to be the minions of Satan. For before man's transgression, before he enslaved himself to death, these had no power to enter into the inner man and insert hostile thoughts. That is why, by his cunning, it came about that he deceived man by conversing through the serpent (Gen. 3:1). But after he had deceived and subdued him, he received power over him, so as to strike the inner man, joining himself to his mind, so that man cannot recognize what in his thoughts is his own and what is the Devil's, unless he looks to the Law.

Romans 7:15a ***For what I do, I do not understand.***

He does not understand what he does, because he sees that he knows one thing through the Law and does another.

Romans 7:15b ***For I do not do what I will, but what I hate, that I do.***

Being subject to sin, he indeed does what he does not will.

Romans 7:16 ***But if I do what I hate, I consent to the Law.***

Paul proves that the Law rightly forbids, when he confesses that he unwillingly does what the Law prohibits; and he says that what the Law commands belongs to his nature, because he declares that what he does outwardly is hateful to himself.

Romans 7:17 ***But now it is no longer I who do it, but the sin that dwells in me.***

For by the law Paul sees that what he does is forbidden, and he agrees that it ought not to be done, and therefore shows that there is something else by whose impulse these things are done, that is, sin. But he always calls it sin, although it is known to be the Devil with his angels; because if the first man had not sinned, these things would not have come about, and therefore it is sin that brings all these things to pass.

Romans 7:18a ***For I know that no good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.***

Paul does not say, as some imagine, that the flesh itself is evil; but that what dwells in the flesh is not good, but sin. How does sin dwell in the flesh, since it is not a substance, but a departure from the good? Because the body of the first man was corrupted through sin so that it could be dissolved: the very corruption of sin, by the condition of the offense, remains in the body, holding the strength of the divine sentence given to Adam, which is the mark of the

Devil, at whose instigation he sinned. Therefore, through that which remains as the consequence of what was done, sin is said to dwell in the flesh, to which the Devil draws near as to his own law, and remains as sin within sin; because the flesh already belongs to sin, so that it may deceive man with evil suggestions, lest man do what the Law commands.

Romans 7:18b ***For the will to do good is present in me.***

Paul declares that the things which the Law commands are so good that he naturally finds them pleasing and wants to do them.

Romans 7:18c ***But I do not find the power to accomplish the good.***

So what is commanded by the Law pleases him, and there is the will to carry it out; yet to fulfill it, the strength and power are lacking, because he is so pressed down by the power of sin that he cannot go where he wishes, nor is he able to resist, since another is lord over his power. For man is now burdened by the habit of sinning, and more easily yields to sin than to the Law, which he knows teaches what is good; and if he does wish to do good, habit presses him down, with the enemy as his helper.

Romans 7:19 ***For I do not do the good that I want, but the evil that I do not want, this I do.***

Paul often repeats this, so that he may make it clear. This, then, is what was said above: that as a captive, through the above-mentioned causes, he is forced to do that which sin desires.

Romans 7:20 ***But if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but the sin that dwells in me.***

This is what he already mentioned above: because, being pressed down and subdued by sin, he carries out not his own will but its will. Now, because he says that a man sins unwillingly, should he appear free from guilt, since he does what he does not want, being pressed by the force of its power? Certainly not; for these things began through his own fault and laziness. For since he has enslaved himself to sin by giving his consent, it rightly rules over him; first it persuades, so that when he is overcome it may then rule. But the Apostle, in order to set the grace of God before us, explains these things to show from how great evils man has been delivered, and what destructions he draws from Adam, and what benefits he has obtained through Christ; so that it might be shown that not even the Law was able to bring him help.

Romans 7:21 ***I find then the law, that when I want to do good, evil is present with me.***

Paul declares that he gives the Law of Moses the consent of his will against the sin that dwells in the flesh, which compels him to do something other than what man and the Law desire.

Romans 7:22 ***For I take delight in the Law of God according to the inner man.***

Paul says that the mind is pleased with those things that are handed down by the Law: this is *the inner man*; because sin does not dwell in the mind, but in the flesh, which comes from the origin of the flesh of sin, and through transmission all flesh becomes flesh of sin. For if the soul itself were from transmission, and sin dwelt in it, since the soul of Adam sinned more than the body, then the sin

of the soul would have corrupted the body. Therefore sin dwells in the flesh, as it were at the doors of the soul, so that it does not allow it to go where it wills. But if it dwelt in the soul, man would never come to know himself; now, however, he knows himself and takes delight in the Law of God.

Romans 7:23 ***But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive to the law of sin that is in my members.***

Paul mentions two laws, of which he insists he sees one in his *members*, that is, in the outer man, who is flesh or body. This is the law that is opposed, that resists the soul, dragging it captive into the condition of sin, so that, going no further, it may not find a defender. The other is the law of the mind, which is the law of Moses or the natural law, which is in the soul. This is pressed down by the violence of sin, indeed by its own negligence, because while it loves vices it subjects itself to sin, so that by that very habit it is held captive; for habit rules over a person. He names four laws: first, the spiritual law, which is also natural, which was renewed through Moses and placed in authority; this is the Law of God. Next, the law of the mind that agrees with the Law of God. Third, the law of sin, which he says dwells in the members as a result of the transgression of the first man. And fourth, that which is seen in the members when it suggests evil and then withdraws. But these laws, repeated, seem to be four, though they are two, that is, good and evil. For the law of the mind is itself the spiritual law, or that of Moses, which is called the Law of God; while the law of sin is the same as that other one which he says is seen in the members, which contradicts the law of our mind.

<u>Romans 7:24-25a</u> ***Unhappy man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

Paul calls the man *unhappy* because he is born under sin. Is not man truly unhappy, who has come into this inheritance of transgression, having sin as an enemy with him, through which Satan has access to him? For Adam constructed steps by which the despoiler ascends to his sons, unless the most merciful Lord, moved by mercy, had given His grace through Christ; so that the human race, lifted up by the reception of the forgiveness of sins, might from then on be able to recover its senses, with sin repressed and condemned. For once lightened of evils and purified, he can resist the adversary, having received power against him, while he is helped by God. Here he introduces, as it were, a third law of faith, more powerful, which he also calls grace: which nevertheless has its origin from the spiritual law; because through it man is set free, so that since Moses gave the law, and the Lord also gave the law, they may be called two; yet one is understood, as far as meaning and providence are concerned. For that is the initiator of salvation, but this is the perfecter. But I do not mean that part of the law which is in new moons and in circumcision and in foods, but that which pertains to the mystery of God and to discipline. Therefore by the grace of God through Christ man is freed from the body of this death. He calls that death the one that he showed above as found in the killing of man through sin in the underworld [*inferos*], which is called the second death: but the body of death is all sins; for many are one body, the individual sins as it were members, found under one author, from which man, snatched away by the grace of God through baptism, has escaped the aforesaid death. For since he is placed in a fleshly body, he would not say that he has been snatched away from that very body: but he called this the body which above he signifies is destroyed through baptism and the observance of the Law. For when he says:

From the body of death, he shows that there is another body that is not of death.

Romans 7:25b ***Therefore I myself with my mind serve the law of God.***

When Paul says the law of God, he means both the law of Moses and that of Christ. But with the flesh the law of sin. *I myself*, that is, I who am freed from the body of death. He is in the body; how has he been freed from the body of death, if not because he has been freed from all evils? For the forgiveness of sins removes all sins. Therefore, freed from the body of death by the grace of God through Christ, *with the mind or soul I serve the law of God*, but with the flesh the law of sin, that is, of the Devil, who through the flesh subjected to him inserts evil suggestions into the soul. Since therefore man is twofold, consisting of flesh and *mind*, he says that he serves the law of God with his mind; because the mind is devoted to God, and having recovered its own power, it can oppose the sin which works through the flesh. For the flesh is corrupted and subject to death, which had been made in such a way that, by the association and union with the soul, it would not die; it has received desires, the burden of which it as it were transfers to the mind, so that it too is weighed down. But what rejects that burden? The death of the grace of God.

Romans 7:25c ***With my mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin,***

As has been said. For now the soul is free, and recalled to good habit, and with the Holy Spirit helping, it can scorn evil suggestions; for authority has been given back to it, so that it may dare to resist the enemy. For he who is no longer liable cannot at all be tracked down against his will. But the flesh, since it has no

judgment, nor is capable of discernment (for it is a harsh nature), cannot close the way to the enemy; lest when he comes he enter, and suggest contrary things to the mind, and through this: *With the flesh*, he says, I serve the law of sin. For since one man consists of flesh and soul, from that part by which he is wise, he serves God; but from the other part by which he is foolish, he serves the law of sin. But if man had remained in that condition in which he was made, there would be no power for the enemy to approach his flesh and whisper contrary things to his soul. But so that the whole man should not be restored by the grace of Christ to his former state, the sentence given against Adam stood in the way (Gen. 3:17); for it would have been unjust to annul a sentence lawfully pronounced. Therefore, with the sentence remaining, by the providence of God a remedy was found, so that salvation might be given back to man, which he had lost by his own fault; so that, healed here, he might believe that his adversary, defeated by the power of Christ, would not dare, once the sentence of the first death has been pierced, to lay claim to man for himself, when the race of Adam has been united, lest man be restored to the condition of his first origin, now remaining wholly immortal.

Chapter 8

Romans 8:1 ***Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh.***

It is true, because *there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*, diligently serving the law of God.

Romans 8:2 ***For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and of death.***

Grace from God demands security for a man, so that he may not be anxious about the suggestions of the Devil, provided that he despises them; for they will do a man no harm at the second death; because the law of faith, that is, the Spirit, has freed man from the second death, once sin has been condemned: nor does it now harm a man that sin is in the flesh, if only he resists it, mindful of the help of God: indeed, he is also to be crowned who presses down the schemes of sin remaining in the flesh; for it is great skill to avoid the snares of a household enemy. Therefore the law of the Spirit of life is itself the law of faith: for the law of Moses is also spiritual, because it forbids sinning; yet it is not of life, because it cannot remit sins for those guilty of death, so as to make those destined to die live. This one, however, because it both wills that one not sin, and calls back from death, is called the law of the Spirit of life, consisting not in letter but in spirit; because it is believed in the heart, and what is believed is spirit. This Law therefore *in Christ Jesus*, that is, through faith in Christ, frees the believer from the law of sin and of death. The law of sin is that which he says dwells in the members, which strives to persuade what is contrary: but the law of death is the law of Moses, because it puts sinners to death. For even in another epistle among other things he speaks of the authority of the law: If the ministry of death, carved in stones, was in glory (2 Cor. 3:7).

It is therefore not a matter for wonder if it is called a spiritual law and a law of death, since the Gospel is likewise so. For in another place among other things he says: To some an odor of life unto life, to others an odor of death unto death (2 Cor. 2:16). For those whom the reputation of virtues, or the sight or the hearing of deeds, attracted to faith, for them the Gospel was an odor of life; but for those whose mind the accomplished power inflamed to contradict, the preaching of faith was an odor of death. Therefore,

though faith is one, it produces diversity among men; just as the sun, though it is one, melts wax but hardens clay. In whatever disposition, then, one has perceived faith as an odor, so too will it benefit him. But it is perhaps said: If faith bestows the same thing as the Law, why is it not also itself in some respect called a law of death; for does it not put to death non-believers? But it is not so. For faith is given which justifies those who take refuge in it; that it may remit for them those whom the Law holds guilty; so that those who act under faith may be free from sin: for those who act under the Law are liable. Those, therefore, who do not obey faith, are not put to death by faith, but by the Law; because, not approaching faith, he is held guilty by the Law: and so all who with an evil mind perceive the words of faith as an odor remain in death.

Let us now see what difference there is when it is called a spiritual law and a law of the Spirit. This is the difference, that it is called a spiritual law for this reason: because it gives precepts through which one does not sin, since he who does not sin is called spiritual; a rival of things above, that is, of heavenly things. But it is called the law of the Spirit because God, whose faith it is, is Spirit. There, therefore, are words; here, the reality: there, the things that are God's; here, God himself.

Romans 8:3a ***Since what was impossible for the Law, in which it was weakened through the flesh, God, sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh on account of sin.***

Paul says this to make the baptized confident, because they have been freed from sin. *Since what was impossible*, he says, *for the Law*. For whom was it impossible? For us, of course, it was impossible to fulfill the commandment of the Law, because we were subject to sin. For this reason *God* sent *His Son in the*

likeness of sinful flesh. This is the likeness of flesh: because although it is the same flesh as ours, yet it was not formed in the womb and born as our flesh is. For it was sanctified in the womb and born without sin, and He Himself did not sin in it. For this reason a virginal womb was chosen for the birth of the Lord, so that in holiness the flesh of the Lord might differ from our flesh; for it is similar in its cause, not in the quality of the substance of sin. Therefore he called it *likeness*, because though of the same substance of flesh, it did not have the same nativity; for the body of the Lord was not subject to sin. For the flesh of the Lord was purified by the Holy Spirit, so that He might be born in such a body as Adam had before sin; although the sentence alone was passed on Adam. Therefore, when God sent Christ,

Romans 8:3b ***He condemned sin because of sin***;

That is, He condemned sin by its own sin. For when Christ is crucified by sin, which is Satan, sin committed its sin in the flesh of the Savior's body: by this act God condemned sin in the flesh, precisely where it sinned, just as he says in another epistle: Triumphing over them in him (Col. 2:15); that is, in Christ. For it is customary to say of anyone condemned: In what matter was he condemned? The answer is given, for example, in murder. So also sin was condemned in the flesh, that is, in the sin which it committed in the flesh. By this sin, therefore, Satan was made guilty and lost his dominion over the souls he held, so that he no longer dares to hold, in the second death, those already sealed with the sign of the cross, by which he was defeated. For this reason the Apostle discusses these things for our assurance.

<u>Romans 8:4</u> ***That the justification of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.***

Therefore Paul says that sin is condemned, so that *in us might be fulfilled the justification of the law* given by Moses; for, being lifted out of the condition of the Law, we have been made its friends, for the friends of the Law are justified. But how is justification fulfilled in us, unless when the forgiveness of all sins is given; so that, sins being removed, the person may appear justified, serving the law of God in mind? This is not to walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit; so that the devotion of the soul, which is spirit, does not consent to the desire of sin; because through the flesh are sown the desires of the soul, in which sin is present. For if sin is condemned by the Savior, how is it present? It is condemned by the Savior, and condemned in a threefold manner. First, he condemned sin in this respect, that he did not sin, dissenting from sin. Then upon the cross, sin is said to have been condemned because it sinned. Where its authority as it were of sin, by which it held men in hell [*inferno*] on account of Adam's offense, has been removed from it; so that from now on, in those in whom the sign of the cross is found, it may not dare to hold them. Thirdly, he condemned sin, in that he made offenses null and void by granting the remission of sins. For since the sinner, by reason of the sin committed, ought to be condemned, by forgiving him he condemned the sin in him. And so, if we too, following the example of the Savior, do not sin, we condemn sin.

<u>Romans 8:5a</u> ***For those who are according to the flesh, they think on the things of the flesh.***

Paul says this because whoever obeys the suggestion that arises through the flesh, thinks on the things of the flesh. For that which follows, desiring use against what is right and the judgment of the

error of the flesh, seems sweet to him; for in the flesh worldly error is marked in every respect.

Romans 8:5b ***But those who are according to the spirit, feel the things that are of the spirit.***

It is clear that whoever restrains himself from the desires of the flesh lives according to the law of the mind; for it seems useful to him to be wise in what agrees with the Law.

Romans 8:6a ***For the wisdom of the flesh is death.***

The wisdom of the flesh is sin, which brings forth *death*. For it is called wisdom, though it is a foolish thing, because to worldly men the errors conceived from visible things, whether in thought or in deed against the law of God, seem to be wisdom: especially because all their effort and cunning is directed toward sinning. For they think themselves to be wise if they pursue this more diligently, though nothing is more foolish than to sin. There is also another wisdom of the flesh, which, puffed up by worldly reasoning, denies that something can be done, so that the world may lack reason for it. Therefore it mocks the Virgin birth, the resurrection of the flesh.

Romans 8:6b ***But the wisdom of the Spirit is life and peace.***

Truly this is *wisdom*, which gains *life and peace*; for by following spiritual things, with the enticements of the present life despised, one will have eternal life with peace, that is, without disturbance; where there is no turmoil and no punishment.

Romans 8:7 ***Since the wisdom of the flesh is hostile to God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be.***

Paul did not say the flesh is hostile, but *the wisdom of the flesh*; that is, not the substance, but either evil actions, or thought, or assertion that is born of error. Therefore, the wisdom of the flesh is, in the first place, the speculation about the stars discovered by men, and then the delight in visible things. These are *hostile to God*, because they make the Lord of the elements and the maker of the world equal to the things He has made, asserting that nothing can be done beyond what the order of the world contains. Therefore they deny that God made it so that a Virgin gave birth, or that the bodies of the dead should rise again; because, they say, it is foolish that God should do anything beyond what man understands. O you wise of the world, who think that God ought not to act otherwise than does the creature made by Him, so that He Himself may be thought similar to the creatures! Therefore they are blinded, so that they do not see what an insult they offer to God. For the work which He agreed to do for the proclamation of His own praise, these men, disapproving it, declare to be unbelievable and foolish: and therefore this wisdom of the flesh cannot be *subject to the law of God*; for they sharpen their zeal to this end, that they may oppose the deeds of God.

Romans 8:8 ***For those who are in the flesh cannot please God.***

The wise of the world are in the flesh, because they devote themselves to the wisdom of the world, through which they resist the law of God. For whatever is against the law of God is carnal; because it is from the world; for the whole world is flesh: indeed, everything visible is assigned to the flesh; for they are kindred to

the flesh, or rather elements of the flesh. And therefore whoever obeys worldly things is in the flesh.

Romans 8:9a ***But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.***

Though placed in the flesh, they are said not to be *in the flesh* if, agreeing with the apostle John, they do not love worldly things (1 Jn. 2:15); for a person's judgment, as it were, shapes his own nature, so that he is called what he thinks.

Romans 8:9b ***If indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.***

Paul says this somewhat obscurely because, having been introduced to the Law, their faith was not yet perfect; but he saw in them the hope of perfection. Therefore sometimes he speaks as to those already perfect, sometimes as to those about to be perfected, that is, sometimes he praises, sometimes he admonishes; so that if, according to what was mentioned above, they conduct themselves according to the law of nature, they may be said to be in the Spirit; because *the Spirit of God* cannot dwell in one who follows carnal things.

Romans 8:9c ***But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this one is not his.***

The Spirit whom above Paul called the Spirit of God, he now calls *the Spirit of Christ*, because all things of the Father are the Son's. This, then, is what he says: that whoever is subject to the above-mentioned errors does not belong to Christ; for he does not have His Spirit, which he had received that he might be a son of God. For the Holy Spirit abandons a person for two reasons: when he

has either the mind of the flesh or the deeds of the flesh. And so by these admonitions he urges them to good conduct; for although men are raised up by the goodness of God, yet the sons of God who are called are burdened, unless they so live that they may not appear unworthy of the name granted to them.

Romans 8:10 ***The body indeed is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is true life because of justification.***

On account of sin he declares *the body dead* for those whom the Holy Spirit abandons, nor does he allow the suffering of their death to reach that One, that is, *the Spirit*. For the Spirit of God does not know how to sin; it is given for *justification*, so that by its help it may justify. Therefore, because it does not know how to sin, it is *life*; it cannot die, because through sin comes death, and therefore the sinner harms himself, not the Spirit which he has received. For the Spirit will not be the cause, since he wills to justify. This is the sign of justification in a man, that through that which dwells in him he may appear, being justified, to be a son of God; for in a insincere man, nor in a body subject to sins, the Holy Spirit cannot dwell, as Solomon says (Wisdom 1:4). But if anyone again lives carnally, abandoned by the Holy Spirit, he will die in his unrighteousness. Now by saying "body," he signifies the whole man as dead because of sin, just as by the prophet under the name of "soul" the whole man is signified, as if the whole were expressed by a part; for he says: The soul that sins, it shall die (Ezek. 18:4). Is it without the body? Here he has put "body" for the whole man, there "soul." And another prophet, by saying "flesh," has signified the whole man; for he says: All flesh shall see the salvation of God (Isa. 40:5). And since the Holy Spirit is given to the baptized, it is said that the spirit is also his. Therefore he called the other parts of man "body" in comparison with it, because the soul, when it sins, is called "flesh"; for it is called by

that which it follows, as I have often already said. In a similar manner also the Lord, when in his passion he did not wish his divinity to be understood as fearing, but that the sadness was of the man, said: The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak (Matt. 26:41); so that in "spirit" he might signify God, and in "flesh" man.

Romans 8:11 ***But if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit dwelling in you.***

Paul treats the same meaning in the same way; for he said "*bodies*," by which he signifies human beings. And because above he said that on account of sin the body dies the second death, here again he has promised that on account of the good life the mortal bodies will be given *life*, that is, the whole human being.

Romans 8:12 ***Therefore, brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.***

It is right and clear that we ought not to follow the example of Adam, who acted carnally and, by sinning first, left death to us as an inheritance; rather, we ought to serve the law of Christ, who by spiritual means redeemed us from the death mentioned above. For *we are debtors* to him, who justified us, stained with carnal vices, by washing us clean through the Spirit, and made us children of God. For formerly, placed in *the flesh*, we lived subject to sins, following Adam's example; but now, having been freed, we must render obedience to the Redeemer. This obedience certainly benefits not him, who needs nothing, but obtains eternal life for us; for he loves us so much that he attributes to himself what benefits us.

Romans 8:13a ***For if you live according to the flesh, you will die.***

Nothing is truer, because if we live according to Adam, we will die; for Adam, transgressing, sold himself to sin, assigned to the flesh. For every sin is flesh; therefore, because vices and transgressions arise outwardly from the senses, that is, from hearing, sight, touch, smell, or taste, they are assigned to the flesh. For every thought looking outward suffers transgression; indeed, the sin of the first man was also born outwardly. To *live according to the flesh*, therefore, is death; for every act of the flesh is outside the Law.

Romans 8:13b ***But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live.***

The body wishes to be governed by the law of the soul; therefore he shows that if, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, *the deeds* and counsels *of the flesh*, which are devised at the instigation of the powers of this world, are restrained so that they do not receive the power to act, life is granted. They are said to be *put to death* if they cease: for they do not exist if they cease; because there is no sin if it is not committed.

Romans 8:14 ***For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.***

Paul says that those *are led by the Spirit of God* in whose actions the designs of the rulers and powers of this world are not seen; for in those in whom they are seen, they are not sons of God, but of the Devil, because "whoever is born of God does not sin," says the apostle John (1 Jn. 3:9). For this is what proves the *sons of*

God and of the Devil. Therefore the Lord said to the Jews, who were doing evil and plotting murder: "You are of your father the Devil" (Jn. 8:44).

Romans 8:15a ***For you did not receive a spirit of slavery again in fear.***

Paul says this because, having received the Holy Spirit, we have been freed from fear of evil deeds, so that from now on we do nothing of that kind for which we might again be afraid. Formerly we were under fear, because, once the Law was given, all were made guilty. Therefore he called the Law *the spirit of fear*, because it placed people in fear on account of sin. But the law of faith, signified by the spirit of adoption, is the law of security, because it frees us from fear by forgiving sins and thereby makes us secure; and for this reason it is called the spirit not of fear.

Romans 8:15b ***But you received the Spirit of adoption as sons, in whom we cry out: Abba, Father.***

Freed from fear by God's grace, we have *received the Spirit of adoption as sons*, so that, considering what we were and what we have attained by God's gift, we may order our lives with great diligence, lest the name of God the Father suffer insult in us, and lest, like the ungrateful, we fall again into all those things from which we escaped. For we have obtained such grace that we dare say to God: *Abba*, that is, *Father*! Therefore he warns us not to turn the confidence we have received into assumption; for if we display a life unlike this utterance by which we say, "Abba, Father," we insult God by calling him Father. For this is why, in his goodness, he granted us what is beyond our nature: so that, though unworthy by our substance, we may become worthy by our deeds.

<u>Romans 8:16</u> ***The Spirit Himself bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God.***

When we act rightly, and the Holy *Spirit Himself* remains in us, He *bears witness* to this voice and *to our spirit*, with which we cry out in prayer: "Abba," that is, "Father," while He remains in us, because we do not say "Abba, Father" rashly. Let us indeed present a life worthy of this cry; and this is the testimony of *children*, if through the Spirit the fatherly mark is seen in them.

<u>Romans 8:17a</u> ***But if children, then heirs: heirs indeed of God, and fellow heirs with Christ.***

Since God the Father can in no way be called dead, while Christ, his Son, is called dead because of the Incarnation, how is it that he who died is said to be the heir of him who always lives, since heirs are surely heirs only of the dead? But this concerns humanity, not divinity. For with God what is called inheritance among us is a gift of the Father transferred to obedient sons, so that the living may be heir of the living by his own merit, not by the necessity of the deceased. Therefore the Lord in the Gospel, by no less a human than divine meaning, indicated in a parable that he had divided his substance among the living (Luke 15:12); for a parable is not composed with an absurd meaning. Therefore, to make us ready to obey God the Father, he exhorts us with this hope, saying that we shall be *heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ*; so that, because the hope of the reward is great, we might be all the more inclined toward the things of God, putting worldly concerns second. What it means to be a fellow heir of the Son of God is taught us by the apostle John; among other things he says: We know that when he appears, we shall be like him (I Jn. 3:2).

<u>Romans 8:17b</u> ***If, however, we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified together.***

Paul explains how we can become fellow heirs with Christ, saying: *If, however, we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified together*. Let us therefore see what it means to suffer with him. To suffer with him is to endure persecutions for the hope of future things, and to crucify the flesh with its vices and desires, that is, to despise the pleasures and displays of the world. For when all these things have died in a person, he crucifies the world, believing in the life of the age to come, in which he hopes to become a fellow heir with Christ.

<u>Romans 8:18</u> ***I therefore consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy of the future glory, which will be revealed in us.***

This encouragement refer to the previous, by which he shows that the things which can be inflicted here by the faithless are small in comparison with the reward decreed in the age to come. Therefore Paul commands us to be prepared for every calamity, because great rewards have been promised for these things; so that in tribulation the spirit may console itself and grow through hope. For we know that some, indeed many, for present gains, which will certainly profit only briefly, undertake harsh and difficult labors, yet sometimes cannot reach what they strive for, since life itself is fragile and uncertain. For what advantages do sailors entrust themselves to such storms and tempests, when they know that in them death is more before their eyes than life? And soldiers, in hope of a present reward, although victory is uncertain, do not hesitate to rush upon swords. How much more, then, ought one to suffer for Christ, whose benefits have also been delayed for us: who promises magnificent things in place of small ones, heavenly things in place of earthly ones, and eternal rewards with glory in

place of temporal ones! We are said to suffer for Christ when what we suffer does not benefit him; rather, because he seeks an opportunity to reward us, he commands this. For, being a good and generous giver, he seeks a reason by which he may give even to the unworthy or the timid. Finally, so that the calamities themselves may be endured, he himself supplies the strength.

Romans 8:19 ***For the creation awaits the revelation of the sons of God.***

For Paul said that the sufferings of the present time are unworthy of the glory that is to come; he added that the creation awaits this, so that the number of the sons of God destined for life may be completed; then at last creation itself too may be freed from slavery to corruption and cease from its defect.

Romans 8:20 ***For creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly.***

Creation, placed under the power of the Lord and Creator, was certainly not subjected to vanity of its own accord; for what has been subjected will not benefit itself, but us. What, then, is the vanity to which it was subjected, unless it is that the things it produces are perishable? For it works to produce corruptible fruits: corruption itself, therefore, is vanity; for all things that are born in the world are weak, perishable, and corruptible, and therefore vain. For they are vain because they cannot retain their own state: indeed, all things, disfigured by continual change, return confused into nature. Solomon also says this about these things, that all these are vanity (Eccles. 1:2). David does not disagree with him, saying: “Nevertheless every living man is vanity” (Ps. 38:6). For is it not vanity to eat and drink, and to care for the affairs of the world? Yet vanity itself is beneficial; for it

helps those born in the world so that, exercised in their bodies through these things, they may learn the mystery of the Creator. For in comparison with eternal things they are vain; but in themselves they are good, since they are necessary.

Romans 8:21a ***But because of him who subjected it in hope.***

Paul immediately explained what this hope is, saying:

Romans 8:21b ***For creation itself will also be set free from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.***

For creation cannot contradict its Creator; it has been subjected for his sake, not without hope. For, having been placed in labor, it has this comfort: that it will have rest when all whom God knows will believe have believed; for whose sake also he subjected it.

Romans 8:22 ***For we know that every creature groans and is in labor until now.***

To be in labor is to suffer. This is the meaning, because every creature groans and suffers through daily labor until the present time. "*Until now*" signifies for as long as it is read. For even the elements perform their tasks with anxiety; the sun and moon fulfill the spaces appointed to them not without labor, and the spirit of living creatures is constrained with a great groan to perform its services; for we see those groaning things compelled unwillingly to work. All these, therefore, await rest, that they may be freed from servile labor. But if this servitude were one that advanced toward pleasing God, creation would rejoice, not suffer; but

because it has been subjected to the servitude of corruption on our account, it suffers. For it sees its works perish daily; every day its work rises and sets. It therefore rightly suffers, whose activity pertains not to eternity but to corruption. As far as can be understood, they are sufficiently concerned for our salvation, knowing that their own liberation will come sooner if only we recognize our Creator more quickly. Knowing these things, therefore, let us show ourselves worthy of all care and diligence, so that we may also be an example to others, moved not only by compassion for ourselves, but also because of that creation which, suffering injuries day and night, groans; for we are accustomed to keep more watchfully watchful in the causes of others.

> **Romans 8:23** ***But not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as our indwelling, we too groan within ourselves, awaiting the redemption of our body.***

After adding the worldly creation, Paul also added that we await this and groan to God, so that all destined for life may be freed from here; for to Christians this world is a sea. For just as the sea is stirred by contrary storms, surges, and creates a tempest for sailors, so the age, shaken by the conspiracy of the faithless, disturbs the minds of the faithful; and the enemy does this with such variety that one does not know what must first be avoided. For if the authorities cease to be against us, he agitates the minds of private individuals; if these too are restrained, he kindles a fire through household members; and if this is set aside, by his craft he creates discord among blood brothers themselves, so that, with the house battered at its four corners, he may cause its ruin from some side. Therefore Christians must flee from here with one purpose; for they ought to follow the example of holy Simeon, who, knowing that war was being waged here against faithlessness, asked to be dismissed in peace (Luke 2:29). This is

what, each praying for all, we pray: that the kingdom of God may come (Matt. 6:10); for then there will be the liberation of our body, that is, of all Christians: by "body" he signified everyone, because we are members of one another. The Apostle, indeed, as a divine man, has a good understanding of us, saying that we groan so that we may be freed from here, just as Simeon also groaned; but I see that we are held by the allurements of the world. Therefore, through the things said above, Paul shows what suffering creation endures on our account; since we, for whom its service is beneficial and who have the Spirit of God as our helper, groan so that we may be freed from here and obtain the promised rewards. How much more, then, does creation groan, which neither has the Holy Spirit as a helper nor labors for its own sake, adding this, that it sees the things it produces through its labor, so that they may benefit the nourishment of God's servants, being contrary to divine law sacrificed to idols! Therefore it grieves more and longs to be freed sooner, knowing that this contributes to the injury of the Creator.

Romans 8:24a ***For in hope we were saved.***

Paul says this because, by hoping for what God promised in Christ, we have earned the merit of being freed. Therefore we were freed in hope, because what is to come will be no different from what we believe.

Romans 8:24b ***Now hope that is seen is not hope.***

It is clear that what is seen is not hope, but what is not seen; and therefore believers are to receive rewards, because they hope for what they do not see.

Romans 8:25 ***For what one sees, what does one hope for? But if we hope for what we do not see, we await it with patience.***

There is no doubt that what is not seen is hoped for; for the future is awaited. This expectation is patience, which merits much from God: that, awaiting the coming of God's kingdom from day to day, one longs for it to come and does not doubt because it is delayed.

Romans 8:26a ***Likewise, the Spirit also helps the weakness of our prayer.***

For above Paul mentioned that we groan and pray for deliverance; and, placed in distress, we want either what is said to be far in the future to happen immediately, or to be quickly removed, though through these things we may attain merit; and we seem to pray with a weak prayer, while its effect is denied to us. For that prayer is weak which asks contrary to reason; and therefore he shows that this weakness is helped by the Holy Spirit given to us. He helps because he does not allow things to happen that are either requested before they ought to be requested or are harmful.

Romans 8:26b ***For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought.***

Paul made it clear that the weakness of our prayer signifies ignorance; for we are deceived when we think that what we ask for is beneficial, although it is not. Finally, when the same Apostle pleaded three times that the temptations might cease from him, because they were frequent, the Lord said to him: "My grace is sufficient for you; for power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9), that is, one establishes merit in this way, when one is found patient in tribulations. Therefore he learned that what he was

asking was against his own good. Sometimes a request is also proud and foolish, as was that of the two apostles James and John, who, when asking for something inappropriate and immense, were told: "You do not know what you are asking" (Matt. 20:22).

Romans 8:26c ***But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings.***

The Spirit of the Lord is not said to intercede for us in human words, but according to his nature. For when what is from God speaks to God, it must speak in the manner of the one from whom it is. No one speaks with his fellow citizen in another language. For the Spirit given to us pours itself over our prayers, so that by its movement it may cover our ignorance and lack of foresight, and ask God for those things that benefit us.

Romans 8:27 ***But he who searches the hearts knows what the Spirit desires, because he intercedes for the saints according to God's will.***

It is clear that to God, to whom nothing is silent or hidden, the prayer of all spirits is known; how much more that of the Holy Spirit, who is certainly of the same substance, and speaks not by the impulse of air, nor like the angels, nor like the other creatures, but as befits his divinity! Therefore he speaks to God when he seems silent to us; for he also sees when he is not seen, and asks for those things which he knows please God and benefit us. Indeed, that same Spirit intercedes for us when he knows that through ignorance, not presumption, we ask for things contrary to our good.

Romans 8:28 ***We know, however, that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called saints according to his purpose.***

Paul says this because, even if those who love God have prayed unwisely, it will not harm them; for God, knowing the purpose of their hearts and their ignorance, does not ascribe to them the things they ask for that are harmful, but grants those that ought to be given to those who love God. Therefore the Lord also says: "For your Father knows what you need, before you ask him" (Matt. 6:32). Therefore those *are called according to his purpose* whom God foreknew, as believers, to be fit for himself, so that they might be known before they believed.

Romans 8:29a ***For those whom he foreknew.***

Those whom he foreknew as destined to be devoted to him, he chose to receive the promised rewards; so that those who seem to believe, yet do not remain in the faith they began, are denied as chosen by God; because those whom God has chosen remain with him. For one is chosen for a time, as Saul and Judas were; not according to foreknowledge, but according to present righteousness.

Romans 8:29b ***To be conformed to the image of his Son.***

Paul says this because they are predestined for the future age for this purpose: that they may become like the Son of God, as I have already mentioned above.

Romans 8:29c ***That he might be the firstborn among many brothers.***

Rightly called *firstborn*, for he was not made before all creation, but was born; after whose example God agreed to adopt human beings as sons. Christ is also the *firstborn* in regeneration. He is also the firstborn from the dead, whose nature is unknown. And the firstborn ascending into the heavens after victory. Therefore he is called our brother, firstborn in all things, because he agreed to be born a man; yet he is Lord, because he is our God, as the prophet Jeremiah says: "This is our God, and no other is reckoned beside him" (Baruch 3:36).

Romans 8:30a ***But those whom he predestined, he also called.***

To call is to assist one who is thinking about faith, or to prick the conscience of one whom he knows will listen.

Romans 8:30b ***And those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified.***

Paul says this in keeping with what was stated above: those whom God foreknew to be suitable for him remain believers, because it cannot happen otherwise, unless those whom God foreknew, he also justified; and thereby he also glorified them, so that they might become like the Son of God. As for the others whom God did not foreknow, he has no concern for them in this grace, because he did not foreknow them as destined to be worthy. But if they believe, or are chosen for a time because they seem good, lest justice appear to be disregarded, they do not remain so as to be glorified, as with Judas Iscariot, or those seventy-two who, after suffering scandal, withdrew from the Savior, though they had been chosen (Jn. 6:71).

Romans 8:31 ***What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?***

It is clear that, with God bearing witness for us, who would dare accuse us, when he himself who is the judge foreknew us and judged us worthy?

Romans 8:32a ***He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.***

Therefore Paul encourages us to be secure in faith, showing that God, as if foreknowing, before we became faithful from being ungodly, delivered His Son to death for us.

Romans 8:32b ***How will He not also give us all things with Him?***

Paul says that God once decreed that those who believe in Christ should be rewarded. For if He granted us what is greater and foremost, delivering His true and beloved Son for our sake while we were still ungodly, why should it not be believed that He will do what is less for us who believe in Him? The rewards are already prepared for believers; for it is less to give us all things with Him than to deliver Him to death for our sake.

Romans 8:33a ***Who shall bring any accusation against God's elect?***

It is clear that no one dares or is able to reconsider God's judgment and foreknowledge concerning us. For who could disapprove what God approves, since no one is equal to God?

Romans 8:33b ***It is God who justifies*** (Isa. 50:8).

This is found in the prophet Isaiah, which Paul here presents as his own; because there is no one else who can condemn what God approves. Or perhaps God himself might accuse us, but he cannot accuse those whom he justifies.

Romans 8:34 ***And who will condemn? Christ who died, indeed, who also rose again, and is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.***

He denies that we can accuse God, because He justifies us; but that we cannot condemn Christ, because He loves us with such affection that He died for us and, rising again, always pleads our causes before the Father. His petition cannot be disregarded, because He is at the right hand of God, that is, in the honor that belongs to God; so that, secure in God the Father and in Christ His Son, who will judge, we may rejoice in His faith. Therefore is that which He says to the apostle Peter: Behold, Satan has demanded to sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail (Luke 22:31-32). In this way, therefore, the Savior intercedes for us; for knowing the shamelessness and arrogance of our adversary, when he rises up against us, if we do not consent to him, the Savior intercedes for us, lest he presume to do anything violently against us, so that the adversary's arrogance may be restrained. For this reason, however, the Son is said to intercede, although He Himself accomplishes everything and is equal to God the Father; and because God is said to be one, lest the Father and the Son be thought to be a single person or a unity, Scripture speaks in this way to distinguish the persons; so that it presents the Son as not unequal, and gives precedence to the Father, because He is the Father and because all things are from Him.

Romans 8:35 ***Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?***

That is, who can turn us away *from the love of Christ*, who has bestowed upon us such great and countless benefits? ***Tribulation***? But it does not, because no torments can overcome the love of a steadfast Christian. For the love of one who loves is stirred up all the more if he is forbidden to love the one whose benefits he has experienced; for while they think they are sowing into his merits, they recall the benefits received.

Romans 8:36-37 ***Is it anguish? Is it persecution? Is it hunger? Is it nakedness? Is it danger? Is it the sword (as it is written, "Because for your sake we are put to death all day long; we are regarded as sheep for slaughter")? Yet in all these things we conquer through him who loved us.***

This is written in the forty-third Psalm. It is therefore clear that all these things he lists, destruction, tribulations, afflictions, and death, cannot be compared or equated with the love of Christ, which he has sown in us. For we have benefits far greater than all these things that seem adverse. For if we die for him, which appears the most grievous of these things, he too died for us, but he died to benefit us; whereas our death does not benefit him, but us. For we lose temporal life so that eternal life may be repaid to us. And what wonder if servants die for a good Lord, when the Lord died for his servants, even the wicked? His benefits therefore prevail, and they encourage the spirit to persevere for the sake of him who loved us.

Romans 8:38a ***For I am confident that neither death.***

This confidence concerns Christ's promise, by which he promised to help the faith devoted to him in tribulation.

<u>Romans 8:38b-39</u> ***Neither life, nor angel, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

These are all the things brought forward for our abduction by the Devil, which Paul mentions for this reason: to fortify us, so that, if they come, trusting in hope and in Christ's aids, armed with faith, we may resist them. For what if death is inflicted? Is it not the greatest gain to find an occasion by which one may go more quickly into the promised kingdom? Nor, if this present *life* should be promised to us, fortified by honor, ought it to turn us away from hope in Christ's benefit, since we know that he will profit us not only in the future but also in the present. Nor indeed, if an *angel* should show himself to us in order to deceive us, prompted by the deceptions of his father the Devil, ought he to prevail against us, since we know that nothing should be preferred to Christ, the Angel of the great counsel (Isa. 9:6). Nor, if some *power* should be performed by anyone, as is said to have been done by Simon Magus, who is said to have flown upward in the air to scandalize Christ's people, ought it to diminish our faith, since we know that the Savior, borne up by a serving cloud, ascended above all the heavens (Acts 1:9). Nor, if he should display himself to us in *height*, concerning which the apostle John says, "Or do you not know the depth of Satan?" (Rev. 2:24), ought he to remove us from devotion to the Lord Jesus, whom we know descended from heaven to unite earthly things with spiritual ones. Nor, if through a ghost by which he plans to deceive us he should show us a *depth* dreadful to behold, by which we might perhaps be terrified and submit to him, is it right even then for us to break faith with Christ,

whom we know descended into the depths of the earth for our sake and, by the pressure of death, liberated the human race. Nor, if he should promise us *things to come*, which he promised Eve (Gen. 3:4), will we give him our assent, having been separated from Christ, whom we believe and know to be God in power and nature. Nor, if by the art and subtleness of his cunning he should for a time fabricate another creature, as Jannes and Jambres fabricated before Pharaoh, is it fitting that through these things he should recall us from the true Creator God, whom we know to have created through Christ his Son a creature existing forever (2 Tim. 3:8). Some think that he said "*another creature*" concerning idols; but this is not true, because he must have meant that which Satan appears to fabricate under the guise of wondrous deception. For who among the faithful would be deceived by these things, from which they withdrew once the error was revealed? But he devises and fabricates these things by which he might even deceive the elect. Therefore, nothing c*an separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus*: for God showed us his love in Christ when he gave him up for us.

Chapter 9

Romans 9:1-3 ***I speak the truth in Christ Jesus, I do not lie, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual pain in my heart; for I myself could wish to be accursed and separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites.***

Since above Paul seems to speak against the Jews, who think they are justified by the Law, now, to show his wish and affection toward them, he says, with his conscience bearing witness, that he

speaks *in Christ Jesus* and *in the Holy Spirit*, so that his faith may not be regarded as impossible because he is their enemy. Therefore he gives Christ and the Holy Spirit, from whom nothing is hidden, as witnesses; their testimony cannot be rejected, and they therefore bear witness to the Apostle while commending him through the power of the signs they performed through him. For because Christ is such a great protection, has shown special love toward the human race, and through his glorious condescension promised immortal rewards, he grieves for his own people, who are his kin according to the flesh; because by their unbelief they deprived themselves of this perpetual and saving benefit. Therefore, he says, "*I could wish*," not "I wish," because he knows it is impossible that so honorable a member, without any preceding fault, should be cut off from the Christian body; nevertheless, he shows his affection and love toward his own people.

Romans 9:4 ***Their adoption is that of sons.***

Paul proves himself to be rightly grieved when he proclaims the praise of their lineage, because formerly the adopted *sons* had the affection and grace of God the Father in vain. He further added that he might make others grieve for them also, saying:

Romans 9:5a ***And the glory, and the covenants, and the legislation, and the worship, and the promises, whose are the Fathers, and from whom Christ is according to the flesh, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.***

Paul reckons so many praises of the nobility and dignity of the Jewish race and of the promises that he might instill grief in everyone over these things; because, by not receiving the Savior, they lost the privilege of the Fathers and the merit of the promise,

becoming worse than the Gentiles, whom previously, because they were without God, they hated: for it is worse to have lost dignity than never to have had it. Meanwhile, concerning the Savior he says:

<u>Romans 9:5b</u> ***Who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.***

For when no mention is made of the Father's name, and the discourse concerns Christ, it cannot be otherwise than that he is called *God*. Frequently, indeed, Scripture, because of its confession of one God, when it speaks of God the Father and joins the Son to God, calls the Father God and the Son Lord. But if anyone does not think that this was said of Christ: Who is God, let him identify the person of whom it was said: for no mention of God the Father has been made in this passage. But what wonder if in this passage he openly spoke of Christ as God over all, of whom elsewhere in the epistle Paul confirmed this meaning in such words, saying: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth (Phil. 2:10)? These are all things over which Christ is God. For there are no others, apart from these, so that Christ is not God over all; nor can every creature bow the knee except to God. Finally, when the apostle John, unknowingly wishing to worship an angel as God, heard from him: Do not do this, for I am your fellow servant. Worship God, he says (Rev.. 19:10). Nor, certainly, would the Lord allow himself to be worshiped unless he were God; otherwise he would have to be accused of trespass and sin, which is impossible; since he himself, rebuking the Devil, shows that the Lord God is to be worshiped and that he alone is to be served (Matt. 4:10). Therefore nothing is unjust against God the Father when Christ is worshiped as God; because, although it is said that only God is to be served, Christ too is served. For he says elsewhere: Whoever serves Christ in these things is pleasing to

God (Jn. 10:4). What, then, remains except that the Father is God and the Son is God, and nevertheless both are believed to be one God? For whether one worships the Father or the Son, he is said to worship one God; and whether one serves the Father or the Son, service is rendered to one God. Therefore there is no distinction; because whoever worships the Son also worships the Father, and whoever serves the Father also serves the Son. And to show that this confession of deity was without flattery, he placed *Amen* at the conclusion, that is, true, so that he might show Christ, God over all, to be truly blessed forever.

Romans 9:6 ***But the word of God has not failed. The word of God has not failed when he said: "In Isaac shall your offspring be named"*** (Gen. 21:12).

That is, what God said would happen has happened; so that those who were his children according to the flesh would not be called the offspring of Abraham, but rather those who have received the faith through which Isaac was born, renewed in the time of Christ, no longer particular but universal; so that what Abraham believed concerning Isaac, they would believe concerning God and Christ, because the Son of God was born to redeem the salvation of the human race.

Romans 9:7 ***Not all who are descended from Israel are Israelites; nor, because they are Abraham's offspring, are they all children: but, "In Isaac shall your offspring be called."*** (Gen. 21:12)

This means that not all are thereby considered worthy *because they are Abraham's* children, but those are worthy who are *children* of the promise, that is, those whom God foreknew would receive his promise, whether from the Jews or from the Gentiles.

For these deserve to be called *Israelites*, that is, those who see God, who believe. For all these are certainly children of Abraham through Isaac, since the entire lineage of the Jewish people descends from Abraham through Isaac. But because, as I said, those are truly Abraham's children who follow the promise made in Isaac, the remaining children should not be called Abraham's. For Abraham, believing, received Isaac because of his faith, because he believed God. In this, the mystery of future faith was foreshadowed: that those would be Isaac's brothers who would have the same faith in which Isaac was born, because Isaac was born as a type of the Savior from the promise, so that whoever believed that Jesus Christ had been promised to Abraham would be Abraham's child and Isaac's brother. Therefore it was said to Abraham, "In your offspring all nations shall be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). This was certainly not fulfilled in Isaac, but in him who was promised to Abraham through Isaac, namely Christ, in whom all believing nations are blessed. The other Jews, therefore, are children of the flesh, while being deprived of the promise; nor can they be reckoned worthy on account of Abraham, since they do not follow the faith by which Abraham became worthy.

<u>Romans 9:8</u> ***That is, not those who are children of the flesh are children of God, but those who are children of the promise are counted as offspring.***

It is clear that *children of the flesh* cannot be called *children of God*: for they were born from the desire of the flesh; but these were born spiritually through faith, according to what was promised to Abraham, so that those who believed might be considered *offspring*.

Romans 9:9 ***For this is the word of the promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son."*** (Gen. 18:10)

This is found in Genesis, prefigured in Christ, so that Christ, who was to come, might be promised as the son of Abraham, in whom the word of the promise would be fulfilled, so that all the nations of the earth would be blessed in Christ. For when the promise was made to Abraham, and he heard, "In your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed," (Gen. 22:18) Christ was surely promised to him through the lineage of Isaac, in whom we see this fulfilled.

Romans 9:10 ***Not only this one, that is, Sarah, but also Rebecca, having Isaac our father from one union.***

Therefore Paul does not say that only Sarah, in the typological sense, gave birth to Isaac, but also Rebecca, Isaac's wife. But one matter concerns Isaac, and another Jacob and Esau; for Isaac was born as a figure of the Savior, whereas Jacob and Esau represent two peoples, that is, believers and unbelievers, so that although they are from one, they are nevertheless different. For in each case a kind is signified, so that those are said to be of one kind who are united in faith or in unbelief. For one is signified in many, not through carnal descent, but through a common cause; because the sons of Jacob are also to be reckoned among Esau, and the sons of Esau among Jacob. For neither, because Jacob is praised, should all born from him rightly be called his sons; nor, because Esau is displeasing, are all descended from him reprobate, since we see both the treacherous born from Jacob's stock and the faithful and beloved of God from Esau. For that many of Jacob's descendants are dangerous is beyond doubt; all the unbelieving Jews, or the believers, derive their origin from him. And that there are good and faithful men descended from Esau is proved by Job, who is

the fifth from Abraham among the sons of Esau, that is, Esau's grandson.

> **<u>Romans 9:11-13</u>** ***For before they had been born, or had done anything good or evil, so that God's purpose according to election might remain, it was said, not from works, but from him who calls, "The elder shall serve the younger,"*** (Gen. 25:23) ***as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."*** (Mal. 1:2–3)

This is found in Malachi. He demands God's foreknowledge in these matters, since nothing can happen other than what God knows will happen. For knowing what each of them would become, he said: "This one, who will be the younger, will be worthy; and the elder will be unworthy." By his foreknowledge he chose one and rejected the other; and in the one whom he chose, God's purpose remains, because nothing can happen other than what he knew and purposed concerning him, that he should be worthy of salvation; and in the one whom he rejected, likewise remains the purpose he had formed concerning him, because he would be unworthy. This is the conduct of one who foreknows, not of one who shows partiality; for he condemns no one before he sins, nor crowns anyone before he conquers. This concerns the case of the Jews, who claim for themselves the privilege of being Abraham's children. The Apostle, however, consoles himself: since he had said that he had continual sorrow in his heart because of the unbelief of those whose adoption as sons, covenant, and from whom Christ the Savior came, just as he himself says, "Salvation is from the Jews" (Jn. 4:22), after examining the Law, he found that not all who are of Israel would believe; nor, because they are called Abraham's children, should all be called Abraham's children, as I mentioned above. Therefore he lessens his sorrow, finding that it had long ago been foretold that not all

would believe, so that he grieves only for those who through envy struggle in unbelief. Yet they can believe, as he makes clear from what follows. But one should not grieve greatly for these unbelievers, since they were not predestined to life; for God's foreknowledge long ago decreed that they would not be saved. Who, after all, mourns for one regarded as long since dead? But when the Gentiles, who previously were without God, enter and receive the salvation that the Jews lost, sorrow is revived; yet again, because they themselves are the cause of their destruction, it is quieted. Therefore God, foreknowing that they would have an evil will, did not count them among the good, although the Savior says to the seventy-two disciples whom he had chosen in the second group, and who later departed from him: "Your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). But this was according to justice, because it is just that each person receive according to his merit. Since they were good, they were chosen for ministry; and their names were written in heaven because of justice, as I said. But according to foreknowledge they were counted among the wicked. For God judges according to justice, not according to foreknowledge. Therefore he also said to Moses: "If anyone has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book" (Exod. 32, 34), so that according to the justice of the Judge he appears to be blotted out when he sins; but according to foreknowledge, he had never been in the book of life. Therefore the Apostle John also says of such people: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would certainly have remained with us" (I Jn. 2:20). There is no partiality in God's foreknowledge; for foreknowledge is that by which he has determined what each person's future will shall be, in which he will remain, and by which he will either be condemned or crowned. Indeed, those whom he knows will remain in goodness are often wicked beforehand; and those whom he knows will remain wicked are sometimes good beforehand. Therefore complaint ceases, because God is not one who shows partiality

(Acts 10:34). For Saul and Judas Iscariot were also good at first. Scripture says of Saul: "He was a good man, and there was none better among the children of Israel" (1 Sam. 9:2); and concerning Judas Iscariot the Apostle Peter says: "He obtained a share in this ministry" (Acts 1:17), that is, the apostleship, in performing signs and wonders. How, then, could he have obtained a saving ministry unless he had been good? In the casting of lots, God's judgment showed that he was worthy at the time when he was chosen, like the seventy-two whom I mentioned above (Matt. 17:5). That is why Judas, after committing every evil crime, moved by repentance, ended his life by hanging. For all goodness cannot be completely obliterated in anyone, since nature cannot be changed, but the will cannot, however, in every circumstance; for something remains in nature that bears witness to the Creator.

Romans 9:14 ***What then shall we say? Is there injustice with God? By no means.***

For because He loves one and hates the other, he adds: Is there injustice with God (Exod. 33:19)? Certainly not, but God is just; for He knows what He does, and His judgment is not to be withdrawn. This is found in the prophet Malachi: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Mal. 1:3). Here he is already speaking of judgment; for earlier he speaks of foreknowledge, saying that the elder shall serve the younger, and likewise, by His foreknowledge, He condemned Pharaoh (Gen. 25:23), knowing that he would not be corrected; but He chose the apostle Paul, who was persecuting Him (Acts 9:3), knowing beforehand, of course, that he would become good. Therefore He anticipated him before the appointed time, because he was necessary; and He condemned Pharaoh before the future judgment, so that He might be believed to be the Judge.

Romans 9:15 ***For he says to Moses: "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will show compassion to whom I show compassion."***

Therefore, "*I will have mercy*," he says, on the one on *whom I will have mercy*, that is, I will have mercy on the one whom I foreknew would receive mercy, knowing that he would turn and remain with me. "*And I will show compassion to him on whom I show compassion*," that is, I will give mercy to the one whom I foreknew would return to me with a sincere heart after his error. This means giving to the one to whom it ought to be given, and not giving to the one to whom it ought not to be given: calling the one whom he knows will obey, but not calling the one whom he knows will by no means obey. To call, however, is not to compel, but to pierce the heart so that it may receive faith.

Romans 9:16 ***Therefore it is not of him who wills or runs, but of God who shows mercy.***

Rightly so, because what is requested should depend not on the will of the one asking, but on the decision of the one giving. For whether it should be given must be weighed by the judgment of the giver; for when Saul sinned and asked forgiveness, he did not receive it (1 Kings 15:24); whereas David, having sinned and asked to be forgiven, obtained pardon (2 Sam. 12:8). Certainly, then, the judgment of God, who gives and does not give, must be followed; for he does not judge unjustly, who wishes all to be saved while justice remains intact. For he who examines the heart knows whether the petitioner asks with such a disposition that he deserves to receive. And although it is dangerous to discern God's judgment, nevertheless, for the sake of those who doubt, so that their minds may obtain healing and they may not think God's judgment unjust, saying, "He calls one and neglects another," and therefore imagining that the condemned can be excused, let us

prove this by facts rather than words. For where there are examples of deeds, no one dares complain or offer any excuse. There were two men, David and Saul. Let us examine their histories and see how each of them was found after God's judgment, so that if Saul is proved to have acted well after not receiving mercy, we may, God forbid, consider God's judgment unjust; or if David, having received mercy, is found to have despised God, whether he remained in the state in which he obtained mercy. To put it briefly, both suffered the loss of their kingdom. And how great was David's distress, when his son wanted to deprive him of the kingdom! In that distress he traveled weeping and barefoot, fleeing as king and leader of God's people, humbled so greatly that he did not even answer his servant who cursed him to his face, so that through patience he might make God favorable to him, through whom he believed the kingdom would be preserved for him (2 Sam. 15:16). But Saul was not found in such distress, because civil war is a greater evil than external war. Moreover, although he had been refused once and again, he did not persist in prayer, though unworthy, so as to earn merit by which he might become worthy. Instead, impatient and indignant at God's judgment, he sought help from the idols he had previously condemned as worthless. Behold, the justice of God's foreknowledge is revealed even to those unwilling to accept it.

> **Romans 9:17** ***For Scripture says to Pharaoh*** (Exod. 9:16): ***"For this very purpose I have preserved you, that I may show my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed throughout all the earth."***

Other manuscripts read: "For this purpose I raised you up, that I may show my power in you." Whether "*I preserved*" or "I raised up," the meaning is the same. For it says that when *Pharaoh*, for that was the name of the kings among the Egyptians, just as among

the Romans kings are called Augusti, was guilty of such great evils that he was unworthy of life, he nevertheless persisted in his wickedness and refused to improve, thinking either that he deserved to live or that God, whom he often supposed could be deceived, was powerless to inflict punishment. He hears from God: "*For this purpose I have preserved you, that I may show my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed throughout all the earth*," so that other nations might learn that there is no other God besides this one, who belonged to the Jews and became the God of Christians; although they too were Christians, and we are now Jews because of Judah, from whom Christ is descended according to the flesh; for the Jews of old, hoping for Christ the Redeemer who was to come, were Christians. For Rahab the prostitute says to the spies sent by Jesus son of Nave, who was previously called Auxes: "We have heard here of the mighty deeds and plagues that were formed in Egypt by your God, and we were greatly terrified; for they fear before your presence" (Josh. 2:9). Pharaoh, therefore, was preserved for this purpose, so that many signs and plagues might be displayed upon him as though he were already dead. He is said to have been raised up because, although he was dead before God, he was granted a short time so that he might appear to live; so that, seeing him subjected to punishment and varied kinds of torment until death, all who were without God, terrified by fear, might confess with the greatest awe that this alone was God, from whom these punishments came. In this same way the ancient physicians, in the case of men deserving death or condemned to death, sought to discover how they might benefit the living by opening what lay hidden within the human body; therefore they learned the causes of illness, and the punishment of the dying contributed to the salvation of the living.

Romans 9:18 ***Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. You will say to me, then.***

He speaks in the person of one who objects, who seems to think that God, disregarding justice, is gracious to someone; so that He accepts one of two equals and rejects the other, that is, He pierces the heart of one, so that he may believe, and hardens the other, lest he believe. He answered him with authority, while nevertheless preserving justice, saying on the basis of the foreknowledge mentioned above:

Romans 9:19 ***What more is there to ask? For who can resist his will?***

First, he says that he cannot be resisted, for he is more powerful than all. Then, because he is the God and Father of all, and therefore wishes evil upon no one; for he wants the things he has made to remain unharmed. Nor is it fitting that he should be unjust, whose benevolence appears so great that he not only brought into existence things that did not exist, but also granted those very things eternal life and glory, so that his work might possess something resembling his majesty. Therefore, since he is so provident and good, there should be no doubt that he is just.

Romans 9:20 ***O man, who are you to answer God!***

Great, he says, is the indignity and presumption of a man answering God in adversity, the unjust answering the just, the evil the good, the ignorant the perfect, the weak the strongest, the corruptible the incorruptible, the mortal the immortal, the worthless servant the lord, the creature the creator. Does the thing formed say to him who formed it: “Why have you made me therefore?” (Isa. 45:9). This is from the prophet Isaiah, which he sets down here as his own, showing that a work cannot complain against its author; for it is in the author’s power to create whatever kind of creature he wishes.

Romans 9:21 ***Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor, and another for dishonor?***

It is clear that some vessels are made for honor, being necessary for honorable uses; others, however, for dishonor, being utensils for the kitchen; yet they are of one substance, differing only in the craftsman's intention regarding their honor. So also God, since we are all of one and the same substance, and all sinners, has mercy on one and despises another, not without justice. For in the potter there is only intention; but in God, intention together with justice, for he knows whom he ought to pity, as I mentioned above.

Romans 9:22 ***But if God, willing to show his wrath and to make known his power, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.***

The meaning itself is that, by the will and long-suffering of God, which is patience, unbelievers are prepared for punishment; for, having long been awaited, they refused to convert. Therefore they were awaited, so that they might perish without excuse. For God knew that they would not believe.

Romans 9:23 ***And to show the riches of his glory in the vessels of mercy, which he prepared for glory.***

The patience and forbearance of God itself is what prepares the wicked for destruction, just as it prepares the good for the crown; for the good are those in whom there is the hope of faith. For he sustains all, knowing the outcome of each one; and therefore it is patience that prepares for glory those who are corrected from evil, or who persevere in goodness. The riches of glory, moreover, are

the diverse dignity prepared for believers. But those who become wicked from being good, and persist in the evil they have begun, he prepares for destruction. This, then, is to reveal his power in great patience: because he is considered not to be going to avenge, since he delays for a long time; when he begins to avenge, his power will appear; for although he can avenge immediately, he endured for a long time, so that the faithless cannot complain when they are condemned. But to prepare each one is to know beforehand what will happen.

Romans 9:24 ***Those whom he also called us, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles.***

Those whom he called, he prepared for glory, both those who were near and those who were far away, knowing that they would remain in the faith.

Romans 9:25-26 ***As it says in Hosea: I will call those who were not my people, my people; and her who was not beloved, beloved. And it shall be in the place where they were called not my people; there they shall be called sons of the living God.***

It is clear that this was foretold concerning the Gentiles, who previously were not God's people: afterward, however, receiving mercy to the criticism of the Jews, they were called God's people; and those who previously were not beloved, after the Jews were rejected, were adopted as sons and became beloved; so that in the place where they were not called God's people, *there they might be called sons of the living God*. For previously they were nowhere called sons of God except in Judea, that is, Jerusalem, where the house of God was, as it says in the seventy-fifth Psalm: God is known in Judea (Ps. 75:2). Afterwards, however, in the

prophecy of Zechariah: I will set Jerusalem, he says, among all the nations (Zech. 12:2); because sons of God were to be everywhere, and the house of God in all places, which is the Church. Therefore the Lord says to the Jews: For the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing its fruits (Matt. 21:43).

Romans 9:27a ***But Isaiah cries out for Israel.***

Paul says this because Isaiah cries out for those who believe in Christ (Isa. 10:22). For these are truly Israelites, as the Lord says to Nathanael: "Behold, truly an Israelite, in whom there is no deceit" (Jn. 1:47).

Romans 9:27b ***Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant will be saved.***

As the Jews withdraw from the merit and promise of the fathers by not accepting it, these are the remnant who persist by believing in the faith of the promise made to the fathers, having become faithful; for they withdraw from the Law who do not believe in him whom the Law promised alone to be sufficient for salvation. Therefore, they must necessarily be regarded as apostates, who, by not accepting Christ, are guilty of violating the Law. Therefore, from the very great multitude, Paul says that only the believers, whom God foreknew, will be saved.

Romans 9:28 ***For He will finish and cut short His word in righteousness; for the Lord will make a shortened word upon the earth.***

He promises to save these whom He calls the remnant through the word, which, defining it justly, the Lord has shortened upon the earth; for it is fitting that the creature should attain salvation in the name alone of the Lord the Creator, that is, through faith; because, once all the new moons, the Sabbath, circumcision, the law of foods, and offerings of animals were removed, faith alone was established for salvation. This is what has been abbreviated from the Law; for what is in faith is contained in the Law as the principal thing of the Law, as the Savior says: "For Moses wrote about me" (Jn. 5:46). Therefore, with the Law abbreviated, the remnant of the Jews are saved; but the others cannot be saved, because they are rejected by God's decree, through which He determined to save the human race.

Romans 9:29 ***And as Isaiah foretold: Unless the Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we would have been like Sodom, and we would have become like Gomorrah*** (Isa. 1:9).

This seed, which alone was left and preserved from all for the restoration of the human race, is Christ, and his teaching, just as he himself says: The seed is the word of God (Luke 8:11). This, therefore, once promised to us, after removing the things that were burdensome in the Law, he left for redemption; so that, forgiveness of sins having been granted, we would not be punished by the Law, as Sodom perished. Paul therefore says that the Savior was left to us as an aid to life, which the Law could not provide, whom God decreed from the beginning would be born: because he alone was found without sin, he would destroy all sins, having conquered the enemy of the human race. This is also found in the Apocalypse of John: Because no one, he says, was found worthy, either in heaven or on earth, to open the book and its seals, except the Savior, who conquered death (Rev. 5:3). This, therefore, is the seed that God once promised and preserved, so

that it might bear fruit when the sins of all, both Jews and Gentiles, had reached their fullness. Its fruit, however, is the forgiveness of sins; for unless Christ had been preserved (whom he therefore calls seed, because through him the human race was restored), the offspring of Abraham would have perished, since they were overwhelmed by sins, and the Law could not benefit them. Therefore he teaches that this one should be followed, who brought the protection of life.

Romans 9:30 ***What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness: the righteousness, however, that comes from faith.***

Since there is a righteousness in the Law, which was entrusted to the world, which forbids sinning; therefore he does not say that the Gentiles attained this righteousness, which is recognized by nature as teacher, but that righteousness which comes from faith in Christ; for this is true and enduring righteousness with God, if it is acknowledged. For what is so righteous as to know God the Father, from whom all things are, and Christ his Son, through whom all things are (1 Cor. 8:6)? Therefore the first righteousness is to acknowledge the Creator, and then to keep what he commanded. The Gentiles, therefore, who previously did not seek righteousness, that is, the Law, which bore witness to the Creator, when Christ came, found a righteousness surpassing that of the scribes and Pharisees. For those who then did not pursue what was lesser attained afterward what was greater; but the Jews, placed under the Law, who ought to have advanced more, grew worse.

Romans 9:31 ***For Israel, pursuing the Law of righteousness, did not attain the Law of righteousness.***

The perfection of the Law is faith, and the Gentiles, embracing it, seem to fulfill the whole Law. But the Jews, refusing to believe in the Savior out of envy, while claiming the righteousness commanded in the Law, namely, the Sabbath, circumcision, and so forth, did not attain the Law, that is, they did not perfect the Law; and those who do not perfect the Law are guilty according to the Law. For he fulfills the Law who, from the law of Moses, comes to faith in Christ.

Romans 9:32 ***Why? Because it was not from faith, but as if from works:***

for, scorning the faith which, as I said, is the perfection of the Law, they claimed to be justified by the works of the Law, that is, by the Sabbath, new moons, circumcision, etc., forgetful of the Scripture which says, "The just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2:4). The righteousness of the Law is so called because, by God's just judgment, these things were given to the Jews on account of the hardness of their hearts; so that if someone happened to step on a dead weasel, or touch some carcass, or if a shrew fell into a vessel, it was declared unclean (Lev. 11:29): observing these things with great carefulness, they became unclean for any cause. But if the blood of a weasel stained the pavement, it had to be cleansed with no little care, and one had to abstain from better foods. The Sabbath, however, and circumcision had their own righteousness in their time, because they were given as figures. The Lord showed this through the prophet Ezekiel, saying, among other things: "Therefore I gave them statutes that were not good" (Ezek. 20:25); because they were irreverent and faithless. But at Christ's coming, since He was to give the gift of salvation, He proclaims through Jeremiah, saying: "I will give them a new covenant, not like the one I gave their fathers" (Jer. 31:32). He calls this covenant the Law, which they did not attain, as I mentioned above. For when

the believing Jews wished to impose this burden of observance upon the Gentiles who had believed, the Apostle Peter then said: "Why do you place a yoke upon the necks of the brethren which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?" (Acts 15:10). For from the time of Christ, the forgiveness promised in the Law was granted; for the prophet Isaiah says: "He will come from Zion, who will deliver and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins" (Isa. 59:20), that is, the new covenant promised by God in Christ.

Romans 9:33 ***They stumbled over the stone of stumbling, as it is written: "Behold, I place in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."***

This is found in Isaiah (Isa. 8:14; 28:6). It has been established by the testimony of many that Christ is signified by the rock or stone; for the prophet Daniel calls this the stone which, cut from the mountain without hands, struck and shattered all kingdoms and filled the whole earth, something evidently spoken of Christ (Dan. 2:34). And in the Law the rock from which waters flowed is called Christ: "The rock," he says, "was Christ." And the apostle Peter, among other things, said to the Jews: "This is the stone which was rejected by you builders" (1 Cor. 10:4). Therefore, the stone of stumbling placed in Zion is Christ (Acts 4:11). Zion, however, is a height, or the city of Jerusalem itself, which was rightly called lofty because of its knowledge of God; in it the Savior, appointed preacher by God his Father, became a stumbling block to the Jews while proclaiming himself the Son of God, born of a woman by the Holy Spirit. Through his body they suffered scandal, and they said: "Are not his mother and brothers with us? How then does he say: 'Because I have come down from heaven'" (Jn. 6:42)? For they did not wish to compare his words with his deeds, so as

thereby to recognize that what he said about having come down from heaven was not absurd, as though the body were acting, and not God, hidden yet revealing himself through his works in the body. Therefore this rock is a scandal and stumbling block to the Jews: this rock undoubtedly signifies the Savior's body. It was cut without hands because it was formed from a virgin by the Holy Spirit, without a man.

Chapter 10

Romans 10:1-2 ***Brothers, the desire of my heart and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation; for I bear them witness that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.***

Since Paul wishes to remove them from the Law, believing that it is a veil for the Jews, lest he seem to do this out of hatred for Judaism, he shows his affection for them and gives great weight to the Law; but he teaches that the time for keeping the Law has now passed. Therefore he testifies that he wishes to provide for them, if only they will listen to him and recognize that he is not their enemy; for he also bears witness to the nobility of their ancestral tradition.

Romans 10:3 ***For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own, they are not subject to the righteousness of God.***

By "ignorance" Paul says that they did not believe in Christ; although they had zeal for God, not knowing his will and purpose, they acted against God, whom they claimed to defend. He speaks

of those who did not receive Christ, not through hatred and envy, but through error. To them the Apostle Peter also says: "I know, brothers, that you did this evil through ignorance, as did your rulers" (Acts 3:17); for, being ignorant that this was the Christ whom God had promised, they said that another was to be expected. Preferring to him their own righteousness, which they had from the Law, he is the righteousness of God through faith. For he himself is righteousness, because God fulfilled in him what he had promised.

Romans 10:4 ***For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***

Paul says this because whoever believes in Christ possesses the perfection of the Law. Since no one was justified by the Law, because no one fulfilled the Law except one who hoped in the promised Christ, faith was established to take the place of the perfection of the Law, so that, with everything else set aside, faith might serve for the whole Law and the prophets.

Romans 10:5 ***For Moses writes of the righteousness that is from the Law, "The person who does these things will live by them"*** (Lev. 18:5).

Paul says this because the righteousness of Moses' law did not make those guilty for a time, if it was observed; that is, they lived by doing the Law, for they were debtors. This is stated in Numbers and in Leviticus.

Romans 10:6a ***But the righteousness that comes from faith speaks therefore: "Do not say in your heart: Who has ascended into heaven?"*** (Deut. 30: 12).

This was said in Deuteronomy, which the Apostle here interprets concerning Christ, saying:

> **Romans 10:6b-7** ***"That is, to bring Christ down." Or, "Who has descended into the abyss?" That is, "to bring Christ back from the dead."***

This is proper to the Apostle. Therefore he says that this righteousness belongs to faith, if there is no doubt about the hope of God, which is in Christ; lest anyone, distrusting, say: "*Who could ascend into heaven*?" For he suffered for this reason: that, having stripped the underworld [*inferis*] by the power of the Father, and conquered death, he might rise again and ascend into heaven with the souls he had rescued. For everyone who, upon seeing the Savior in the underworld [*inferos*], hoped for salvation from him was delivered, as the Apostle Peter testifies; for he says that "the gospel was preached even to the dead" (1 Pet. 4:6). Whoever, therefore, does not doubt these things in his heart is justified by faith. But fear causes one to be justified by the law; for he fears the law because he sees that it inflicts punishment on sinners. Therefore the righteousness of the law is not great, nor does it confer merit before God, but only for the present; whereas faith, though foolishness to unbelievers, has a reward with God, from whom what is not seen is hoped for.

> **Romans 10:8** ***But what does Scripture say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart*** (Deut. 30:14).

This is written in Deuteronomy because what is said to us so that we may believe is not far from our mind or mouth; for although it is not seen by the eyes, what we believe is nevertheless not contrary to the nature of souls and the manner of speaking. Indeed, seeds are implanted in that very nature, which, cultivated by hearing and the will, bear fruit as a testimony to the Creator.

Romans 10:9a ***This is the word of faith that we preach.***

It speaks of no work of the Law, but only that faith is to be placed in the cause of Christ.

Romans 10:9b-10 ***For if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.***

Whatever Paul said above, he has here made clear: this is the rule of faith, to believe that the Lord is Jesus, and not be ashamed to profess that God, raising Him from the dead, brought Him bodily into heaven, where He had come to be incarnate; lest one suffer the Gospel sentence which says: "Many, indeed, of the rulers believed in Jesus, but they did not openly profess it because of the Jews. For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God" (Jn. 12:42).

Romans 10:11 ***For Scripture says through Isaiah: Everyone who believes in him shall not be put to shame*** (Isa. 28:16).

For when the examination of all things begins on the day of judgment, and all false notions or doctrines are brought to confusion, then those who believe in Christ will rejoice, seeing it revealed to all that what they believed is true, and what was thought foolish is wise. For among the others they will see themselves alone as glorious and wise, who had been considered disgraceful and foolish. For there is true approval there, where there is reward and condemnation.

Romans 10:12a ***For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek.***

Paul says that all are generally either mistaken because of unbelief or exalted because of faith; for without Christ there is no salvation with God, but rather punishment or death. For neither will the privilege of the Fathers be able to praise the Jews; nor the giving of the Law, since they did not accept the merit and promise of the Fathers. The Gentiles, moreover, have no testimony by which they may be praised according to the flesh, unless they believe in Christ.

Romans 10:12b ***For the same Lord is Lord of all, rich toward all who call upon him.***

It reveals that this refers to everyone, whether Jews or Greeks; because without calling upon the Lord Christ no one lives with God. Since, then, he is Lord of all, as the apostle Peter agrees, saying: “This is,” he says, “the Lord of all”; (Acts 10:36) yet he is rich only toward those who call upon him, because they will receive the reward. But he is not rich toward the faithless, because they are not participants in his blessings; nor will they receive what they did not believe he would give. And yet he did not call God rich toward those who believe, but toward those who call upon him; so that, after believing, the soul may not cease asking for what it has always been taught by God to ask, as it is written in the Gospel according to Luke concerning the adversary, because he is subtle and crafty, that one must always pray: but to believers alone the forgiveness of sins is given. It follows, moreover, that one devoted to prayer is delivered from evil and can obtain what God has promised to those who watch with all their heart (Luke 18:1).

Romans 10:13 ***For everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.***

This was said in Micah[1]. For God himself, who appeared to Moses, says: My name is the Lord (Exod. 6:3). This is the Son of God, who was therefore called both Angel and God; so that he would not be thought to be the one from whom all things exist, but the one through whom all things exist, so that the fact that he was called God may refer to the unity of the Father and the Son: Angel, however, because he was sent by the Father as the messenger of the promised salvation. And he is said to have been sent so that he would not be believed to be the Father himself, but begotten by him. Therefore everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. Moses also spoke in this sense: Whoever, he says, will not listen to that prophet shall be exterminated from among the people (Deut. 18:18, 19). If he is the Lord of all, he is invoked by servants. And because it is true, he added:

1 This is stated in Joel. But although the cited passage is found in that prophet (Joel 2:32), it is preferable to present the author's words with their blemishes than corrected without the authority of the copies.

Romans 10:14a ***How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed?***

Certainly the Jews themselves do not believe in Christ, whom he called Lord. This follows from what I said above, because one must first believe in order to have confidence in asking. Or how shall they believe him of whom they have not heard? It is clear that one cannot believe him to whom obedience is denied.

Romans 10:14b ***And how shall they hear without a preacher?***

Nor is this obscure, because whoever resists the preacher does not accept his authority.

Romans 10:15a ***Or how will they preach unless they are sent?***

Nor does this admit of question; for they will not be true apostles unless they are sent by Christ, nor will they be able to preach without authority; for no signs of virtues bear witness to them.

Romans 10:15b ***As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim peace, who proclaim good things!***

The prophet says this in Nahum (Nahum 1:15). By mentioning feet, he signifies the arrival of the apostles traveling throughout the world and proclaiming that the kingdom of God is approaching; for their coming enlightened people, showing the way by which one goes in peace to God, the way which John the Baptist had first come to prepare. This is the peace toward which those who believe in Christ hurry. Finally, holy Simeon, because there is discord in the world, rejoiced at the Savior's birth: "Now, Lord," he said, "let your servant depart in peace" (Luke 2:29); because the kingdom of God is peace. For when all discord has been removed, everyone will bend the knee to the one God. Finally, the heavenly Jerusalem is interpreted as the vision of peace, which is our mother.

Romans 10:16a ***But not all obey the Gospel.***

It is true, for although the world is illumined by the splendor of the Lord's teaching, there are nevertheless those who resist, who call the light darkness. For their mind's vision has been so dulled by error that they do not receive the radiance of the true light. The Gospel accuses them, saying: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it (Jn. 1:5).

Romans 10:16b ***For Isaiah says: Lord, who has believed our report*** (Isa. 53:1)?

That is, who has believed what we have heard from you and proclaim? Paul established by the prophetic example that the Jews are contradictors of the Gospel truth. For the Law accuses the Jews, because just as it was among the ancients, so it is now. For he does not belong to this number who does not receive the faith.

Romans 10:17 ***Therefore faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.***

It reveals that unless something is said, it can neither be heard nor believed. But I say: Have they not heard? That is, they heard, but did not wish to believe. For although faith comes from hearing, there are nevertheless those who do not believe what they hear. For they hear and do not understand, because their hearts have been blinded by hatred.

Romans 10:18 ***And indeed their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.***

Paul testifies that the preaching of God was heard by the Jews to such an extent that he even declares the world filled with the divine announcement; for the very structure of the world

proclaims the Creator. What the Psalmist said about creation (Ps. 18:5), the Apostle says here about the evangelists, because it was heard everywhere, and the preaching of Christ's name reached every place. For where the presence of a preaching man was lacking, the sound and report nevertheless arrived, just as the report of the mighty deeds performed in Egypt had reached all nations, as Rahab the harlot testifies. For if it reached every place, the Jews could not have failed to hear the apostolic preaching, so that none of them might be excused from the crime of unbelief.

Romans 10:19a ***But I say: Did Israel not know?***

That is, did it not know? For through the testimonies mentioned above Paul accuses the people of Israel of unbelief, seeming sorrowfully to complain about all the Israelites: he does not deny that Israel knew and obtained what had been promised to it in the Law, but rather that Israel which is Israel in spirit more than in flesh, which God had also foreknown would believe. For all heard, but not all believed; therefore:

Romans 10:19b ***First Moses says, in the song of Deuteronomy: I will provoke you to jealousy by a non-nation, by a foolish nation I will anger you*** (Deut. 32:21).

These are the words of one angry, because the Jews were always found to be distrustful; and he assigns one generation and cause to all their evils. While he rebukes those present, he there especially touches upon those who were to come, to whom this applies. For all these share one condemnation if they persist in unbelief. Jealousy, therefore, arose in them from envy, when they saw a nation which, previously, because it was without God, was harsh in understanding, call its God the one who had been the God of the Jews, and attain the gift promised to them, through which,

suffering jealousy, they would be stretched by anger, so that they might pay the due penalty for their wickedness and unbelief. For nothing consumes a person so much as jealousy, which God therefore appointed as the avenger of unbelief, because it is a grave sin. For, always sent into anger, they are tormented when they hear that the Law and the prophets belong to us who believe in Christ.

> **Romans 10:20** ***Isaiah dares and says: "I was revealed to those who did not seek me, and I was found among those who did not inquire of me"*** (Isa. 65:1).

Since above Paul used Moses' words concerning the exclusion of the Jews, he also added this example from the prophet Isaiah, so that from its fuller context he might make clearer that God, having expelled the Jews, freely offered grace to the Gentiles, to the shame and destruction of the Jews. For the prophet Isaiah bears witness to this in the person of Christ.

> **Romans 10:21** ***But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out my hands to a people who do not believe and who contradict"*** (Isa. 65:2).

Here the Israel meant is carnal, that is, the sons of Abraham, but not according to faith; for the true and spiritual Israel is the one who sees God by believing. "*All day long*" always signifies "continually"; for they were continually accused. Therefore they are rebuked for refusing to believe, so that they may know that they themselves are the cause of their destruction. This can also be understood of the Savior, who, with hands extended on the cross, condemned the sin of those killing him. For that passage cries out against the wicked deed of the Jews, which Isaiah above dared to say concerning those who had been enemies of God: he

shows that they would become friends, and that those who were called Israelites, because they were disobedient, were to be rejected as enemies.

Chapter 11

Romans 11:1a ***I say therefore: Has God rejected His inheritance? By no means.***

Because Paul showed the people of Israel to be unbelieving, lest it be thought that he had called all Israel faithless, he shows that God has not rejected His inheritance, which He foreknew, that is, the sons of Abraham whom He knew would be faithful to Him. For He would not promise them the kingdom if He knew that none of them would believe. Therefore, according to the Law, the Lord's inheritance is the sons of Abraham, but those who believe.

Romans 11:1b ***For I too am an Israelite, from the offspring of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.***

By his own example Paul teaches that part of Israel has been saved, which God foreknew would be saved, or could still be saved; and he assigns part of Israel, because of its continual unbelief, to destruction.

Romans 11:2 ***God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.***

This is what the Savior says: "Father, those whom You gave Me, I have guarded, and none of them has perished except the son of perdition" (Jn. 17:12). So too, of those whom God foreknew

would believe, none has been rejected from the promise; for it happened just as God foreknew it would.

> **<u>Romans 11:3-4</u>** ***Do you not know what Scripture says in Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have dug up your altars: and I alone am left, and they seek my life"*** (1 Kings 19:10). ***But what does the divine response say to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bent the knee before Baal"*** (1 Kings 19:12).

These things are clear; for Paul shows that not only Elijah remained, who, devoted to God, did not worship idols, but also many who remained in the faith of God, just as not a few of the Jews believed. History also agrees with this matter, because many were hidden in caves (1 Kings 18:4) on account of Ahab, king of Samaria, and his wife Jezebel, who, believing the false prophets, persecuted God's prophets and urged the people toward idolatry.

> **<u>Romans 11:5</u>** ***Therefore, also at this present time, a remnant has been saved according to the election of grace.***

That is, Paul says, even now these have remained in the promise of the Law, while many whom God foreknew have departed. For those who received Christ as promised in the Law stood in the Law; but those who did not receive him departed from the Law. Therefore believers are called the remnant, that is, those remaining in the Law.

> **<u>Romans 11:6a</u>** ***But if by grace, then no longer of works.***

It is evident that grace is the gift of God, not a due reward for works, but granted freely, with mercy intervening.

Romans 11:6b ***Otherwise grace is no longer grace.***

This is true, because if it is a reward, it is not grace; but since it is not a reward, undoubtedly it is grace, because to grant pardon to sinners is nothing other than grace, and it is offered to those who do not seek it, so that they may believe. Grace, therefore, is twofold, because this befits God, who abounds in mercy: both to seek those whom He may freely heal.

Romans 11:7 ***What then? What Israel was seeking, it did not attain; but the elect attained it?***

The Israelites are those who are carnal, who, thinking that they could be justified by works of the Law, did not attain to being righteous through faith before God. Therefore, since all are guilty through the Law, for "cursed is everyone who does not continue in all the things written in the book of the Law, to do them" (Deut. 27:26), those who believed themselves to be justified through faith attained election, so that, having been justified, they might become sons of God, mindful of the Scripture that says: "For the righteous shall live by faith" (Hab. 2:4), that is, not by the Law.

Romans 11:8-10 ***But the others were blinded, as it is written; this passage is read in Isaiah: God gave them a spirit of remorse, eyes so that they would not see, and ears so that they would not hear, to this very day*** (Isa. 6:9). ***And David says: Let their table become a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense for them*** (Ps. 68:23).

Let their eyes be darkened, so that they may not see, and always bend their backs.

Therefore he curses the table of the wicked, because there the innocent are accustomed to be deceived; for they are deceitfully invited to a banquet so that they may be destroyed. Therefore Ammon, David's son, was deceived by his brother Absalom (2 Kings 13:27), and the wicked Holofernes thought he could deceive the holy Judith at a feast (Judith 12:1), and at the table of the criminal Herod the wicked rejoiced over the head of John the prophet (Mark 6:8). The two prophets have one meaning concerning such people, who from the beginning of faith were found to be resisting enemies of the good. But some of them were corrected and revised, though late; others, however, remaining in stubbornness, did not escape the severity of the sentence, being forever bent, that is, blinded; so that thereafter they could not look upon the way of truth (which they had scornfully rejected through hatred, turning away from it) and attain the grace of salvation. For whoever, after understanding, refused to believe ought to obtain what he desires: that thereafter he be unable to receive faith and be saved. The examples of the prophets mentioned above therefore contain a twofold meaning; for they were decreed and written in two ways. Indeed, two classes of people are contained here. One is blinded forever because of its hatred, so that it may not be saved; for they are of the worst will, to such an extent that, while understanding, they say they do not know what they hear. Finally, they said of the Savior: What does he mean? We do not know what he is saying. Why do you listen to him? He has a demon and is insane (Jn. 10:20). But the other group, which is truly Israel, contradicted them: These words do not come from one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? While they envied the Savior, therefore, they did not wish to appear to understand what they heard; so that, since he seemed not to be understood by the lawyers and Pharisees, he would be thought to

speak absurd things and things outside the law—something that could also turn others away from the faith. Hence they hear from the Savior: You have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves do not enter, and you prevent others from entering (Luke 11:52). For who would not follow the counsel and judgment of the lawyers and Pharisees—not of the frivolous, but of the somewhat more serious—who appeared to be defenders of the Law? Finally, they said to those who were truly Israelites: Has any of the rulers believed in him? so that they might rightly seem not to have believed, if they had made many accomplices in their conspiracy; because what is defended by few usually does not appear approved. Therefore they were blinded, so that thereafter they could not believe and be saved. Thus they were helped according to their own will; since, knowing the truth, they called it false, they would thereafter not understand what is true, so that they might hold as true the falsehood they desired. The other class is that which, while pursuing the righteousness of the Law, does not receive the righteousness of Christ: hence it is no longer acting through the envy of an evil will, but is blinded for a time through the error of zealously imitating the tradition of the Fathers; for they ought to learn from Christ's mighty deeds that he cannot deceive, whose magnificent power is evident in his works, and compare his preaching with the new testament promised through the prophets, and then profess that he is the one who was promised. They were found to be neglectful toward God and to side with men. Therefore they are blinded so that, by joining themselves to their promise through that very zeal, while they envy the Gentiles, they may return to faith in God.

Romans 11:11a ***I say therefore: Have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means.***

Paul says what I mentioned above: they did not so lose faith that they would never believe again; that is, they were not blinded by their wickedness to such an extent that they could not be healed, just as we read that the Devil fell, when the prophet Isaiah says: "How Lucifer fell from heaven" (Isa. 14:12), signifying a fall and apostasy. Therefore, he does not say that they stumbled so as to fall, but that, because of their offense, they were temporarily hardened.

Romans 11:11b ***But through their trespass salvation came to the Gentiles, so that they might rival them.***

This is what Paul said: salvation was given to the Gentiles because of their sin. For because the Jews rejected God's gift, it was transferred to the Gentiles, so that the Jews, kindled by the zeal of rivalry, might be converted to Christ, jealous for the promise made to the fathers.

Romans 11:12 ***But if their trespass is the riches of the world, and their shrinking is the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!***

It reveals that if their trespass benefited the world, since through their loss it has more good people, for the Gentiles are far more numerous than the Jews, and their shrinking, which is the loss of the promise, is the riches of the Gentiles, through which they have gained eternal life, how much more their fullness! It is clear that the world will be richer in good people if those who have been blinded are also converted; for the world will be saved in large part. "*The world*" means people, as it was said of the Savior: "Behold, the whole world has gone after him" (Jn. 12:19).

Romans 11:13-14 ***For I speak to you Gentiles: Inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I honor my ministry, if somehow I may rival my own flesh and save some of them.***

Paul shows the Gentiles how warmly he loves the Jews: for he honors his ministry, by which he is the apostle of the Gentiles, if, because of his affection for his own race, he also works to bring the Jews to the faith. For he will become more honored if he wins to life even those to whom he was not sent: for it will be the greatest praise for the Fathers if he finds brothers who had perished.

Romans 11:15 ***For if their loss is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?***

Paul says this because, if the Gentiles were reconciled to God through the unbelief of the Jews, for the world's increase in faith in Christ, what will be the extent and fullness of salvation in this matter if the Jews are brought to faith in Christ, except that the world may be brought to life from the dead in its people? Therefore, since there has been progress, he says that efforts should be made so that they may believe; for the dullness of blindness is removed when the appointed time of sin has been completed, so that they may receive the free choice of their own will.

Romans 11:16 ***And if the first fruits are holy, so is the lump.***

It is evident that what is of one substance is one; and therefore the *first fruits* cannot be holy while the lump is unclean, for the first fruits are from the lump. Therefore Paul shows that those whose

fathers have already obtained faith cannot be called unworthy of faith; for if part of the Jews believed, why should it not also be said that the other part can believe?

Romans 11:17 ***And if the root is holy, so are the branches.***

Repeating the same thought with different words, Paul praises the meaning with two examples. But if some of the branches were broken off, that is, if some of them did not believe, cut off from the promise, you, although you were a wild olive shoot, were grafted among them and became a sharer in the root and richness of the olive tree. This signifies that, because many Jews did not believe, the Gentiles were grafted in through faith into the hope of the promise, causing grief to the Jews, but not according to the law of agriculture, since they graft a good shoot onto a bad tree; for these, though they were in a bad root, were grafted onto a good tree. Therefore he says that the wild olive was grafted in, so that the shoot might bear the fruit of the root, having become its partner.

Romans 11:18a ***Do not boast against the branches,***

That is, do not rejoice in their unbelief; for it displeases God if anyone exults in another's misfortunes, as Solomon says (Prov. 24:17). For they were not cast off for the sake of the Gentiles, so that they might rejoice; but because they did not believe, they gave occasion for the Gentiles to be preached to.

Romans 11:18b ***But if you boast, you do not bear the root; rather, the root bears you.***

That is, if you exalt yourself over those into whose root you have been grafted, you insult the race that received you so that you might be good from what was evil; nor will you stand if you destroy that by which you stand.

Romans 11:19 ***You say, then: The branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.***

Paul speaks in the person of a believing Gentile, because he thinks one should rejoice at the downfall of the unbelieving Jews, saying: Their rejection made room for the Gentiles. But they were not rejected by God so that the Gentiles might enter; rather, they made themselves rejected by despising God's gift, and therefore gave the Gentiles an opportunity for salvation. He wishes to suppress this arrogance, so that one may rejoice more in salvation and not insult another's suffering; for the one who rejoices in others' misfortunes is easily deceived.

Romans 11:20a ***Well,*** that is, you speak correctly, because you have been grafted in among the broken branches; ***but they were broken off because of unbelief,***

That is, not because of you, but through their own fault; for when they were unbelieving, you were called to salvation to provoke them to jealousy. Therefore you ought to give thanks for God's gift through Christ, not insult them; but also pray that, if their downfall has brought you salvation, they too may return to their origin. Then you will please God, who has shown you mercy; for he called you for this reason: that through your jealousy he might restore them also to grace.

Romans 11:20b ***But you stand by faith.***

Because the Jews fell through unbelief, Paul says that these stand by faith; for although they previously lay fallen because of unfaithfulness, they began to stand by believing. Do not be arrogant, but fear. That is, do not be proud, but beware lest you also fall.

Romans 11:21 ***For if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps He will not spare you either.***

It is true that if He blinded those who were worthy by the privilege of the Fathers, to whom the promise had also been made that they would be adopted as God's children, because of unbelief, what will He do to those who doubt or exalt themselves, who have been elevated by no recommendation, for though they had no dignity, they were honored?

Romans 11:22 ***See, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: toward those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in goodness; otherwise you too will be cut off.***

Paul testifies that God is good to the Gentiles, because, although they followed idols and were certainly deserving of death, in His patience He waited for them, and, even while they did not yet seek Him, He freely called them and forgave their sins. But toward the Jews He is severe; for He blinded them because they rejected the gift of God. Here, however, he now refers to those Jews who, because of their hatred, have been blinded forever; therefore he also says that they have fallen. But those whom he mentioned above have stumbled, yet have not fallen, because he shows that they were blinded for a time; and therefore God was severe toward those apostates, so that they would be blinded forever.

Romans 11:23 ***But if they do not persist in unbelief, they too will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.***

Paul demonstrates that God's justice does not consist in severity toward those whom He blinded for a time, because He did not cut them off in such a way that He could not graft them in again if they repent, He who said through the prophet: "I will replant those who return to me" (Jer. 24:6), so that Christian Gentiles, knowing this, may not insult the Jews, certain that God's mercy is reserved for them as for those who have fallen.

Romans 11:24 ***For if you were cut from the wild olive tree by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into the good olive tree, how much more will those who are according to nature be grafted into their own olive tree!***

Let us understand the olive tree as the faith by which Abraham was justified; but the wild olive tree, because its nature is wild and unfruitful, signifies faithlessness: and therefore, if those who were always enemies of God, converted and grafted into the faith of Abraham, are grafted in, although they are not descended from him, how much more will the Jews, if they believe after their disbelief, be restored to their ancestral nature and grafted again into their own promise!

Romans 11:25-26a ***For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, lest you be wise in your own estimation: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles enters; and therefore all Israel will be saved.***

It is not obscure: the Jews were given a temporary blindness, those who, while zealous for the Law, did not see that the gift promised by God had come, which was preached by Christ. For they were blinded by zeal, thinking that the law of works should never cease; therefore they were zealous for the Sabbath. Because of this offense they were hardened in part, so that they might suffer for their unbelief, seeing the Gentiles joyfully professing that they had obtained the promise made to Abraham. Yet, when the abundance of the Gentiles had been admitted, the darkness would be wiped from the eyes of their minds, so that they could believe; and the spirit of remorse, which prevents their hearts and grants them blindness, would restore to them the free choice of the will; because their unbelief did not arise from hatred but from error, so that they might be corrected and afterward saved.

Romans 11:26b ***As it is written.***

To prove that the gift reserved for them by God, he sets forth below the example of the prophet Isaiah, so that he might teach that by this grace, through which believing Jews have been freed, we too can be freed; for it had not been exhausted, but always abounds. Therefore he says:

> **Romans 11:27** ***He will come from Zion who redeems and turns away wickedness from Jacob; and this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins*** (Isa. 59:28).

The meaning of this example always remains, as long as there are those who believe. For this is the Lord Jesus, who was promised to come from heaven for the liberation of the human race; he himself daily forgives the sins of those who turn to him. Nor does

he immediately condemn unbelievers, but waits, knowing that they may advance toward the knowledge of God.

Romans 11:28a ***According to the Gospel, they are indeed enemies for your sake.***

The cause of their unbelief is that they are enemies of the Gospel, so that their error and transgression might open the way for the nations, before the appointed time, to enter the faith, as I mentioned above; for first the Gospel had to be preached everywhere to all the Jews, and only then was it necessary for the nations also to believe the word of God. But because they did not believe, the kingdom was taken from them and given to the nations. Therefore he warns that they should not be insulted, whose transgression benefited the nations; rather, the one should be insulted whose sin harmed others. For one should not rejoice in their unfaithfulness, but grieve if they delay in converting; so that, just as the nations rejoiced at their sin because they were saved, so they may rejoice at their conversion, for through their occasion they received God's grace more quickly.

Romans 11:28b ***But according to election, they are beloved for the sake of the Fathers.***

Although the Jews sinned gravely by rejecting God's gift and are worthy of death, nevertheless, because they are children of good men, through whose privilege and merit they received many benefits from God, they will be received with joy when they return to the faith; for in them God's love is stirred up by the memory of the Fathers.

Romans 11:29 ***For the gifts and calling of God are binding.***

It is true, because God's grace in baptism does not seek groaning, or weeping, or any work, but only a profession from the heart. Nor, because they had grievously sinned by not accepting God's promise, and because grave sins get forgiveness only through weeping and groaning, did he show that they could no longer receive mercy because he did not see them grieving; he shows that this is not required at the beginning of faith, for God's gift freely forgives sins in baptism.

Romans 11:30-31 ***For just as you once did not believe God, but now have obtained mercy because of their unbelief, so they too now have not believed in your mercy, so that they themselves may also obtain mercy.***

Paul recalls the unbelief of the Gentiles, so that they would not boastfully insult the Jews who had not believed, but would take pleasure in recognizing God's promise. For, he says, you Gentiles, although the oracles of God had been entrusted to you with them, were rebellious; but now you have received mercy, not through your own merit, but to their blame. Why, then, should these not receive mercy when converted, who previously lived according to God's law and to whom the promise was made?

Romans 11:32 ***For God has entrusted all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.***

Moreover, the Gentiles from ancient times lived in wickedness and ignorance, as those without God; therefore the Law was revealed in writing, by which they might be restrained from rushing headlong. And since, through the adversary's cunning,

sins began to multiply, so that by the prohibition man might be made more guilty, God, in the mercy of his goodness, always providing for man, so that what was sin without the Law might also be erased under the Law, decreed this: that he should establish faith alone, through which the sins of all might be abolished; so that, since there was no hope for all people through the Law, they might be saved by God's mercy. This is what it means to have *entrusted all to disobedience*: that then the decreed gift might come from God, when all were afflicted by disbelief, so that the grace of the gift might be most welcome. Therefore let no one boast; for it is wretched to be proud when one has been forgiven.

Romans 11:33 ***O the depth of the riches, wisdom, and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and how mysterious his ways!***

Paul bears witness to the exalted and boundless God, in the riches of his wisdom and knowledge, with all praise and thanksgiving; for his plan and judgment are incomprehensible. For, knowing from the beginning the conduct and deeds of human beings, since the human race could be saved neither by justice alone in its severity, nor by mercy alone attain the advancement of merits, he decreed at each time what should be preached, while nevertheless allowing each person to follow his own judgment; for justice is known by nature itself as its guide. And because the authority of natural justice had grown dull through the habit of sinning, the Law was given, so that the human race might be restrained by fear of the Law revealed. But because those who did not restrain themselves were held guilty by the Law, mercy was proclaimed, which would save those fleeing to it, but would blind those rejecting it for a time, inviting the nations to their promised calling, those who previously refused to follow the justice of God given through Moses, so that, while envying their salvation, they

might through that very zeal be converted to the origin of the Savior from the root promised in the Law. This is the depth of the riches, wisdom, and knowledge of God, who by many providence acquired both Jews and Gentiles for life.

Romans 11:34-35 ***For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Or who first gave to Him, and it shall be repaid to him*** (Isa. 40:13)?

This is written in Isaiah. It is clear that God alone knows all counsels, and that He alone needs nothing; for all things are from Him. Therefore, His counsel is neither comprehended nor measured by anyone, because those below cannot know the mind of Him who is above. Finally, to the believing Jews it seemed impossible that God's counsel and will could be for the redemption of the Gentiles; likewise, it seemed difficult and unbelievable to the Gentiles that the Jews who had not believed could be converted, or that believers could be received so that they might be saved. Among other things, this is the counsel of God that remained hidden and could not be comprehended.

Romans 11:36 ***For from him, and through him, and in him are all things: to him be glory.***

Paul declared that the meaning and plan of God cannot be investigated: "*For from him*," he says, "*and through him, and in him are all things: to him be glory*." By this statement he revealed a meaning that was hidden from the world; for since God is the creator of all things (for he made things that did not exist, so that they might exist), therefore all things are from him. And since they are from him, through his Son, who is certainly of the same substance, they began to exist, whose work is the Father's work. Therefore, since he works through the Son, all things are through

him. And since the things that are from God are through God: after being reborn in the Holy Spirit, all things are in him, because the Holy Spirit too is from God the Father; therefore he also knows what is in God. Therefore the Father is also in the Holy Spirit; because that which is from God the Father cannot be other than what God the Father is.

And therefore to him be glory, because from him, and through him, and in him are all things. Therefore those things which began to exist from him, through him, and in him cannot know his meaning and plan. But he knows all things, because all things are in him. He disclosed the mystery of God, which he previously said should not be unknown to them.

Chapter 12

Romans 12:1–2 ***I beg you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies as a living, holy sacrifice, pleasing to God, your reasonable service. And do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good, pleasing, and perfect.***

Paul urges them by the mercy of God through which the human race is saved. After treating of the Law and the faith of the Jewish and Gentile peoples, he urges them to lead a good life; for through this the hope of faith is obtained. This warning is therefore given, that they may remember that they have received mercy, and be watchful concerning the service of Him from whom it was given to them, through whom they were freely justified from ungodliness, knowing that this is a living, holy, and acceptable sacrifice to God, if we keep our bodies undefiled, unlike worldly

people who pursue pleasures. This is the will of God, your sanctification (1 Thess. 4:3). For bodies subjected to sins are not considered living, but dead; for they are under the despair of the promised life. For this purpose we are washed from sins by God's gift, so that from this time, leading a pure life, we may stir up God's love toward us, not making the work of His grace void. For among the ancients the offering was killed for this reason: to signify that people, subjected to death because of sin, were represented by it. But now, because people have been purified by God's gift and freed from the second death, they ought to offer a living sacrifice, so that it may be a sign of eternal life. For, as then, bodies were not sacrificed for bodies; now, however, not bodies but the vices of the body must be put to death. But in order that we may make our service effective, while preserving justice, let us guard modesty; for modesty accomplishes nothing, nor can it be considered reasonable, if justice is neglected. This is to be conformed to spiritual things, renewed in spirit and faith, to know what pleases God, and that nothing else is good and perfect.

> **Romans 12:3** ***For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone among you, not to think more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, and to each according as God has apportioned the measure of faith.***

Paul clearly shows that we ought to think in such a way as not to exceed the bounds of righteousness, so that it may be useful not only to ourselves but harm no one. For this is carefulness: to benefit some rather than harm them; and one ought to be content with the lot that God has measured out, and with the merit of each person's faith; nor should anyone claim for himself what he sees has not been granted to him. This is, not to think more highly, because the whole cannot be granted to one person. For even if someone leads a good life, he should not therefore claim for

himself the wisdom of teaching; nor, because he possesses knowledge of the Law, should he claim the services of the Levites. Therefore he exhorts and teaches through the grace given to him. This grace is understood as knowledge of the Lord's teaching, through which he instructs that humility and righteousness must be pursued.

Romans 12:4-5 ***For just as in one body we have many members, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.***

By the example of the body Paul teaches that none of us can do everything alone, because we are members of one another, so that one does not lack the other; and therefore we ought to care for one another, and no one should hinder another, because we need one another's services. This will be loving Christ: if the members exhort one another to fulfill the role by which the body may be perfected in Christ.

Romans 12:6a ***Having different gifts of God according to the grace that has been given to us.***

Now Paul reckons the offices assigned to the members according to the merit of faith, so that when a member sees what office has been assigned to it, it may not complain against another, to which it sees something else entrusted, but may rejoice with it, so that the body of the Church may be perfect.

Romans 12:6b ***Or prophecy according to the rule of faith.***

Paul begins with prophecy, which is the first proof that our faith is rational. Indeed, those who believed, having received the Spirit, prophesied. This, therefore, is given according to the measure of the recipient, that is, as much as the circumstance requires for which it is given.

Romans 12:7a ***Whether ministry in serving.***

A minister is strengthened to provide the service of brotherhood to the extent that he believes he ought to serve; lest, laboring beyond faith in service, he be wearied in vain; for each person receives what he strives for from the heart.

Romans 12:7b ***Or one who teaches in instruction.***

Similarly, Paul says that the teacher is helped in teaching, so that to the extent his faith is directed toward teaching, he may be inspired to impart heavenly discipline.

Romans 12:8a ***Whether one encourages, in encouragement.***

Such a person is likewise prepared by the help of the Spirit in the very task toward which he strives, so that he may have grace while he urges others on. For he challenges the brethren to goodness, or unbelievers to faith.

Romans 12:8b ***He who gives, in simplicity.***

To this person Paul says that one who gives assistance with a good disposition is always supplied with aid, the Spirit providing it, so

that the one who gives simply may not lack, as Solomon says: "He who gives to the poor shall not lack" (Prov. 28:27). He therefore gives simply who does not do this artificially, so that praise may be given him by men, but so that he may obtain merit for this very thing from God.

Romans 12:8c ***He who oversees, with carefulness.***

Whoever undertakes the care of overseeing over the brethren is to receive, according to his faith, care and authority, so that he may prosper in that for which he is careful, having fruit in those over whom he leads.

Romans 12:8d ***He who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.***

This person also, according to his disposition, who shows mercy with a joyful spirit, not as though it were extorted from one unwilling, is founded and strengthened by God, so that he may suffer no weakness in this matter, knowing what Solomon said: "While you have the opportunity, do good" (Prov. 3:27). But this is to be understood in many ways; for mercy is diverse under one name. For if above Paul said, "He who gives, in simplicity," what need was there to repeat it, unless by the one name of mercy he signified many good works? For to forgive sinners is mercy; to bring help to one placed in some need or oppressed is mercy; to clothe the naked, to break bread for the hungry, to take in an abandoned child, to cover a corpse, and to perform other such works is mercy. Therefore, if he performs these things diligently and without weariness, he will have the reward of this work both in the present and in the future. Therefore every act of mercy ought to be done both simply and with joy, so that simplicity excludes hypocrisy, while joy bears witness to confidence in the hope of future reward.

Romans 12:9a ***Love without deception.***

The Spirit aids this mind, which reflects that it should love its brother because it knows this pleases God the Creator; so that it does not do this in flattery of the present life, and so that, because it seeks this with a devoted mind, it may fulfill it through acts of service. For they hear the Lord say: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another" (Jn. 13:34).

Romans 12:9b-10 ***Hating evil, observing to what is good, being kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, anticipating one another in mutual honor.***

Paul does not consider it a great thing to avoid evil unless one follows to what is good; for the former arises from fear, the latter from love. Nor is one said to be kind or to maintain brotherly love if they have not anticipated one another in mutual acts of service.

Romans 12:11a ***Not sluggish in carefulness.***

This is what the prophet Jeremiah says (Jer. 48:10): "Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord negligently." For one who is sluggish in divine conduct is without hope; therefore Paul added:

Romans 12:11b ***Fervent in spirit.***

That is, in the practice of divine work or of the Law, let him not be lukewarm, as it is said in the Apocalypse of John: "Because you are lukewarm," he says, "I will vomit you out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16). Daily meditation removes sluggishness and makes one

vigilant. The works of the Lord are those Paul commands to be done for the benefit of the Church, that is, of the brethren.

Romans 12:11c ***Serving the time.***

In Greek it is said therefore: serving God; but this does not fit the passage itself. For what need was there to place here this summary of all devotion, when Paul mentions the individual members that pertain to obedience and service to God? For in all those things he lists, full service to the Lord is rendered. Elsewhere he explains what it means to serve the time, when he says: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil; so that you may know how to answer each one" (Ephes. 5:16). Since he had said, "Fervent in spirit," lest they understand this as meaning that they should indiscriminately and inopportunely thrust religious words upon hostile times, thereby perhaps causing scandal, he immediately added: "*Serving the time*," so that they might speak the faith of religion modestly and honorably, at suitable times, in suitable places, and to suitable persons. For there are some even in this time of peace who so hate the words of God that, when they hear them, they blaspheme the way of Christ with great anger. Paul himself also served the time when he did what he did not wish; for unwillingly he circumcised Timothy, and, having shaved his head, went up to the temple to be purified according to the Law, so as to calm the madness of the Jews.

Romans 12:12a ***Rejoicing in hope.***

After saying, "Serving the time," Paul added, "*Rejoicing in hope*"; so that if, perhaps, because of the wickedness of the time, it is not permitted to speak publicly about the faith, but one must live in fear, let him rejoice in hope; because this sadness produces joy.

Romans 12:12b ***Patient in tribulation.***

This is to rejoice in hope: to be patient in tribulation; for because of the joy of hope, he endures tribulation, knowing that the things promised in return for these are much greater.

Romans 12:12c ***Constant in prayer.***

Prayer is very necessary; because, in order that tribulation may be endured, one must persist in prayers.

Romans 12:13 ***Sharing in the memories of the saints***

It is clear that whoever wishes his prayers to be heard must strive to imitate the lives of the saints; for when he imitates them, he shares in them. Therefore, to remember and share in them means to imitate their deeds; and if they are in need of material support, it must be shared with them, as Paul says elsewhere: "Concerning the collections made for the saints" (1 Cor. 16:1); and to the Galatians: "That we should remember the poor" (Gal. 2:10).

Romans 12:14a ***Pursuing hospitality.***

The imitator and lover of the saints pursues hospitality, following the examples of Saint Abraham and Lot, the righteous man.

Romans 12:14b ***Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse.***

Paul wishes to make Christians altogether new, and therefore also wants to remove from them this habit, which is common to all: lest, provoked by an angry spirit, they readily wish first to curse; but rather, having conquered their anger, let them bless, and let the Lord's discipline be praised.

Romans 12:15 ***To rejoice with those who rejoice, to weep with those who weep.***

This is what Paul says elsewhere: If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; and if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it (1 Cor. 12:26). For when someone offers faithful support in distress, he lifts up the person's spirit and gains merit for himself before God, because he loves a member of Christ's body; and if he grieves with an unbeliever, he spurs that person all the more toward progress in the Lord's discipline.

Romans 12:16a ***Being mutually sympathetic.***

That is, one ought to share in a brother's trouble, as Paul also says in another epistle: "Considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:1-2).

Romans 12:16b ***Not being wise in high matters.***

To be wise in high matters is pride; for even the Devil, when he aspired to high things, fell away. If there is exaltation in the mind, and someone, presuming perhaps on the soundness of his conduct, does not grieve with his brother but scolds him as though he were a sinner, this is pride, which, by putting himself first, gives offense. The Lord also points this out, saying: "First cast the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see to cast the splinter out

of your brother's eye" (Luke 6:42). For exaltation itself is sin; and even if he were not a sinner, which is impossible, he becomes a sinner by being proud. Finally Solomon says: "God resists the proud" (Prov. 3:34).

Romans 12:16c ***But accepting with the humble.***

That is, having laid aside pride, let him make another's cause his own, and his own as another's, so that he may have grace with God, because "whoever exalts himself will be humbled" (Luke 14:11).

Romans 12:16d ***Do not be wise in your own eyes*** (Isa. 5:21).

This is written in the prophet Isaiah, which Paul here sets down as his own, so that justice may be held in common, and not that one person be just to himself but unjust to everyone else.

Romans 12:17a ***Returning evil for evil to no one.***

This is what the Lord says: Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of God (Matt. 5:20). For the commandment in the Law was: You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy (Lev. 19:18). This, as it seems, is justice; but so that the righteousness of Christians may abound, they are taught not to return evil for evil, so that they may be perfect and receive a reward for this at God's judgment. For he seems to go beyond justice itself who, in order to be better, does not do what is permitted, as an imitator of heavenly justice. The justice of the world, therefore, granted to him by God makes

him innocent; but heavenly justice makes him perfect, so that he may have merit before God.

Romans 12:17b ***Providing what is good not only before God, but also before all people.***

To provide means to keep future good things before one's eyes, so that deeds may be performed which, once done, cannot be subject to blame, but rather may be praiseworthy, whether before God or before people. Let no one think that, because things permitted by God are not displeasing to Him, one need not care if they are a stumbling block to a brother; this passage warns that what is done must both not displease God and not be a stumbling block to a brother. For even if something is permitted, if it causes a brother to stumble, it does not please God, because God commands us to care for his salvation. Therefore good is provided before God and people if permitted things are done in such a way that they cause no stumbling.

Romans 12:18 ***If possible, so far as it depends on you, live at peace with all people.***

Everyone who preserves divine justice wishes to be peaceable. Let anyone see to it if he despises this peace, so as to become an enemy to such a man, either because he does not wish to be criticized by him, or because he envies his good qualities; yet, as far as it concerns him, he does not disagree with those who act rightly. For this is the unpeaceable man who, abandoning the will of the Law, follows his own right, although David says: "With those who hated peace, I was peaceable" (Ps. 119:7). But this was necessary because of the power of the persons involved, so that by acts of humility he might overcome one whom pride so exalts that he despises the commandments of the Law. It may also happen

that, out of fear of God, someone shows himself peaceable toward one who hates peace. For when he does not wish to repay evil with evil, he is peaceable, that is, he overcomes evil with good, so that by acts of obedience he may overcome one whom the commandments of the Law do not overcome. Therefore, Paul says, "*if possible, so far as it depends on you*," so that we may be seen to have peace while doing good. Now, if he is not a lover of peace, you nevertheless wish to be peaceable, insofar as it concerns you. But if someone is profane and blasphemous, and you cannot have peace with him, it certainly will not be attributed to you; for the apostle John did not even permit those who deny that Christ came in the flesh to be greeted (2 Jn. 7). We, then, are ready, if possible, to live at peace with all; but when others resist, it becomes impossible, not because of us, provided no complaint is brought against us. For whoever harms no one plainly appears to be peaceable.

Romans 12:19a ***Do not defend yourselves, beloved, but give place to wrath.***

Paul advises that anger be set aside so that the bonds of peace may be preserved, especially since anger commonly leads to sin, when someone, stirred by anger, demands more than the cause of the offense warrants; or brings harm upon himself if he seeks to punish graver sins with an unsuitable vengeance, for he makes weak one whom he could have kept corrected and sound. Therefore Solomon also says: "Do not be excessively righteous"; for, he says, "there is one who perishes in his own righteousness" (Eccles. 7:17). For wishing to answer each sin, he may find death in the course of vengeance, both for himself and for the one whom he afflicts with blows; for people often commit offenses in punishing. He forbids suitable vengeance not only against subordinates, but also against equals and superiors; that is, if

perhaps a brother sins against us, let us not seek revenge, but forgive, leaving it to God's judgment, lest, while we are held by anger, the enemy find an opportunity to suggest and persuade us of what is against us.

Romans 12:19b ***For it is written.***

To strengthen his exhortation, Paul confirms this by the example of the Law, saying: For it is written in Proverbs,

Romans 12:19c **"*Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, says the Lord"*** (Deut. 32:35).

Therefore, if we fail entirely to do what he teaches, he shows that God is despised by us. Therefore, if vengeance is entrusted to God, we benefit in two ways: for when he conquers anger, he becomes perfect, and he will be avenged by God's judgment.

Romans 12:20 ***If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by doing this, you will heap burning coals upon his head*** (Prov. 25:21).

Paul shows that not mere vengeance should be reserved for God, but that benefits should also be given to enemies, so that we may truly show that we have enemies not because of our merits, and that we strive to overcome them with kindness so that they may cease from their enmity. If they persist in hostility through the wickedness of their mind, our kindnesses will benefit them unto punishment; or certainly, pierced by the diligence of our kindnesses, they will revive like dead coals. Therefore, in order to make us so perfect that we may acquire not only ourselves but also others for life, the Lord, through Solomon, not only forbids us to

repay our enemies in kind, but also urges us to invite them to friendship through compassion.

Romans 12:21 ***Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.***

This is the Apostle's interpretation, encouraging us not to repay our enemies in kind, as has been said. For it will greatly benefit us if we yield to hatred; indeed, evil conquers the one who seems for a time to be overcome by it. For the Savior likewise conquered evil by not resisting; hatred turns against itself, and while being defeated, thinks it is victorious. For the enemy's aim is to draw us away from our purpose as well, seeking an opportunity for us to sin. Therefore, if provoked by him, we do not repay him in kind, we conquer him with good; for this reason we do not resist, so that we may preserve goodness, setting justice aside, because justice compels us to retaliate.

Chapter 13

Romans 13:1a ***Be subject to all higher authorities; for there is no authority except from God.***

Since Paul commanded that the law of heavenly justice be followed, lest it seem that he disregarded the present one, he praises this one: for unless this is observed, that cannot be kept; indeed, this is like a tutor who instructs children so that they may follow the path of the higher justice. For mercy cannot be attributed to anyone unless he possesses justice. Therefore, to confirm the right and fear of the natural law, he testifies that God

is its author, and that those administering it possess God's ordinance. Therefore he added:

Romans 13:1b ***And those that exist have been ordained by God.***

So that no one may think them shameful as mere human inventions; for they see that divine right has been assigned to human authorities. Therefore, he is subject to authority who, out of fear of God, abstains from those things it forbids.

Romans 13:2 ***Therefore whoever resists the authority resists God's ordinance.***

This is directed against those who are powerful through their influence, or who do not believe that they can be caught by anyone, and therefore think they can mock the law; it shows them that the law belongs to God, and that those who escape judgment for a time by some means will not evade God's judgment. But those who resist acquire condemnation for themselves. It is clear that everyone will either be justified or condemned by their own works. For those who sin while hearing the Law are without excuse.

Romans 13:3a ***For those who rule are not a terror to good conduct, but to evil.***

Paul calls these rulers kings, who are created to correct life and prevent wrongdoing, bearing the image of God, so that others may be subject to one.

Romans 13:3b ***Do you wish not to fear authority? Do what is good, and you will receive praise from it.***

Praise from authority arises when someone is found innocent.

Romans 13:4a ***For he is God's minister to you for good.***

It is clear that rulers have been appointed so that evil may not be done.

Romans 13:4b ***But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not carry the sword without cause.***

That is, he threatens for this reason: so that, if he is despised, he may punish.

Romans 13:4c ***For he is God's minister, an avenger for wrath against the one who does evil.***

Since God has appointed a future judgment and wills that no one perish, he has ordained rulers in this age, so that, by instilling fear, they may be like instructors to all, teaching them what they should observe, lest they fall under the punishment of the future judgment.

Romans 13:5 ***Therefore be subject, not only because of wrath, but also because of conscience.***

Paul rightly says that they ought to be subject not only because of wrath, that is, present vengeance, for wrath produces retribution, but also because of the future judgment; for if they escape here,

punishment awaits them there, where they themselves will be punished by their accusing conscience.

Romans 13:6 ***For this reason you pay taxes; for they are God's ministers, serving for this very purpose.***

Therefore Paul says that taxes, or what are called monetary dues, are to be paid, so that they may show subjection, by which they may know that they are not free, but act under a power that is from God; for they are subject to their own ruler, who acts in God's place, just as they are subject to God, as the prophet Daniel says: "For the kingdom is God's, and to whomever He wills, He will give it" (Dan. 4:14). Therefore also the Lord says: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matt. 22:21). Therefore they are to be subject to him as to God, and the proof of this subjection is that they pay him taxes.

Romans 13:7a ***Render therefore to all their dues.***

Paul wishes debts to be paid by all, because even the powerful are debtors to their inferiors, so that they may respond to their merits.

Romans 13:7b ***To whom tribute is due, tribute; to whom tax is due, tax.***

First Paul commands that those things owed to royal authority be paid, because in these matters there is greater reason or necessity.

Romans 13:7c ***To whom fear is due, fear.***

Fear is to be shown to authority, because fear prevents sin; then to a parent or earthly master, so that he may give thanks for the Christian son or servant.

Romans 13:7d ***To whom honor is due, honor.***

This honor may also be shown toward those who seem lofty in the world, so that, seeing the humility of Christ's servants, they may praise rather than condemn evangelical discipline.

Romans 13:8a ***Owe no one anything, except to love one another.***

Paul wants us to have peace, if possible, with everyone, but love with our brothers, and even this with honor preserved. He calls them debtors because it is fitting and owed to bow before a person worthy of honor, whether present or future. For one bows to him from whom he has received honor; therefore he is called a debtor. For if you do not do this to your prince, you are proud; for a person must be honored either for merit or for age.

Romans 13:8b ***For whoever loves his neighbor has fulfilled the Law.***

He fulfills the Law given through Moses who loves his neighbor; for the commandment of the new law is also to love enemies.

Romans 13:9a ***For, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet"*** (see Matt. 5:43).

Moses received this written from God for the restoration of the natural law.

Romans 13:9b ***And if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself";***

This is written in Leviticus (Lev. 19:5). Since, therefore, the commandments mentioned above remain, Paul signifies that the Law is fulfilled in love, as he said: even if there are other commandments that he has now left unmentioned, love nevertheless satisfies all the commandments. For if the human race had loved one another from the beginning, there would be no iniquity on earth; for the origin of unrighteousness is discord. Therefore, love of iniquity is itself iniquity; because what is evil to the wicked is good to the good.

Romans 13:10 ***Love of neighbor does no evil; for love is the fulfillment of the Law.***

It does no evil because love is good, and that which is the perfection of the Law cannot sin. Through the words of the Law, Paul wishes to arrive at the evangelical meaning. For this reason he recalls what is greatest in the Law, so that he may join the Gospel to it, showing that they have one author and one meaning. But because something needed to be added in Christ's time, he commanded that not only neighbors but also enemies be loved. Therefore it is added: The fulfillment of the Law is love (Matt. 5:43): so that it is righteous to love one's neighbor, but abundant and perfect righteousness also to love one's enemies. But what else is it to love an enemy than to wish that he cease from hatred and to seek nothing harsh against him? It is to love him by wishing for him those things through which he may have God's favor: this

is heavenly righteousness, which makes us like God the Father, who bestows annual gifts even on those who do not worship him. For the Lord, too, while hanging on the cross, intercedes for his enemies (Luke 23:35), so that he might demonstrate the fullness of the righteousness he had taught.

Romans 13:11a ***And knowing this time, that it is already the hour for us to rise from sleep.***

Paul says that it is time for us to advance toward merit. That is, to rise from sleep and do good, as in the day, that is, openly; for illegal things are done at night, that is, in secret. For now, having been placed in the light of revealing, which is in the knowledge of God, and recognizing what we ought to follow, we must strive to live purely and attain the promised reward, having shaken off sleep, that is, ignorance or negligence.

Romans 13:11b ***For our salvation is now nearer than when we believed.***

It is clear that, after baptism, those who live well and devote themselves to love are not far from the merit of the promised resurrection. For the good life of a Christian is a sign of future salvation.

Romans 13:12a ***The night has passed, but the day has drawn near.***

Paul signified by the night the old man, who has been renewed through baptism. He says that it has passed like the night, while the day has drawn near, by whose light the truth has appeared to us, so that we might know what we ought to do. For previously,

not knowing Christ, we were in darkness; but when we learned of him, light arose within us; for we passed from falsehood to truth.

Romans 13:12b ***Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.***

The works of darkness are a carnal life, driven by worldly enticements; this is deserving of darkness, as the Lord says: Take him away; and, binding his hands and feet, cast him into the outer darkness (Matt. 22:13). But putting *on the armor of light* consists in performing good deeds; for just as evil acts are assigned to darkness, because they are done secretly by those who do evil, so those who do good act openly, because they are not afraid but rejoice. Good deeds, therefore, are the armor of light, waging war against darkness, which is the vices of the flesh.

Romans 13:13a ***Let us walk honestly, as in the day.***

It is true; since one does not sin publicly, let us act as one acts publicly; for nothing is so public as truth.

Romans 13:13b ***Not in festivities and drunkenness.***

Festivities are luxurious banquets, which are either celebrated by contributions from all, or customarily hosted in turn by companions; so that no one there is ashamed to say or do anything dishonorable, because each person assumes that it is his own banquet. For at another's table they are usually restrained by shame; but here they gather for the purpose of doing shameful things freely, with an abundance of wine, and of arousing various pleasures of lust. Therefore Paul commands that such banquets be avoided.

Romans 13:13c ***Not in bedrooms and immodest acts.***

After the luxurious banquet and drunkenness Paul added what follows, namely, *immodest* intercourse; for this is the fruit of such wantonness.

Romans 13:13d ***Not in strife and rivalry.***

Paul rightly urges restraint from these, because every dispute and jealousy produces enmity, which he calls darkness; for they cannot attain the reward of light.

Romans 13:13e ***But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in its lusts.***

Paul forbids care for the flesh, that is, pleasure; so that whatever is forbidden by the Law may not be desired, or at least, if desired, may be overcome. These are indeed the works of the flesh; having cast them off, let them put on the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, renewed through Christ, let them refrain from these evils. For he has put on Christ who has separated himself from every error and disgrace, lest he be found without a new garment at the wedding feast and be shamefully cast out and consigned to darkness (Matt. 22:11); otherwise, they have not put on Jesus Christ the Lord, over whose new garment they put on old rags; for having put off the old man, they must remain in newness of life.

Chapter 14

Romans 14:1 ***Welcome the one who is weak in faith, not for disputes over opinions.***

Since there were Jews who had brought the Romans to the name of Christ, with the Law mixed in, as I mentioned at the beginning of the epistle, some therefore thought that they ought not to eat forbidden meat; while others who followed Christ without the Law thought that, contrary to the Law, it was permitted to eat. Therefore disputes arose among them, which the Apostle, seeking unity and salvation, removes through divine reasoning, showing that neither does eating benefit one before God, nor does not eating harm one. He calls weak the one who fears to eat because the Jews were forbidden to do so. He therefore wishes such a person to be left to his own judgment, lest, having suffered scandal, he withdraw in mental disturbance from love, which is, as it were, the mother of souls; for Christians ought to be peaceful and calm.

Romans 14:2a ***For another believes that everything should be eaten.***

This confidence in reading does not hesitate to eat everything that was given for human use. For Paul reads in Genesis that everything God created was very good (Gen. 1:31); therefore nothing should be rejected, since neither Enoch, who was the first to please God, nor Noah, who alone was found righteous in the flood, nor Abraham, that friend of God, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, righteous men and friends of God, among whom was Lot, nor the other righteous are read to have abstained from these things.

Romans 14:2b ***But he who is weak should eat vegetables.***

Therefore, since he thinks that he should eat vegetables, he must not be persuaded to eat meat, lest he eat with a doubt and seem to sin because he does not keep his resolve.

Romans 14:3a ***Therefore, let the one who eats not despise the one who does not eat; and let the one who does not eat not judge the one who eats.***

For eating or not eating is a matter of choice; and therefore no dispute should arise from this. For all things were made for this purpose: that they should be subject to human will, because they are subject to human dominion.

Romans 14:3b ***For God has accepted him.***

He was accepted by God when he was called to grace.

Romans 14:4a ***Who are you to judge another's servant? He stands or falls before his own master.***

It is clear that a servant ought not to judge the will of a fellow servant, to whom the law has not been handed down in this matter; for God is the judge, whose servant he is, of the conscience with which he eats or does not eat.

Romans 14:4b ***And he will stand, for God is able to make him stand.***

He will stand, Paul says, before his master, because whether he eats, he will not be liable; nor, if he does not eat, will he be

blameworthy, provided that he does this out of devotion, not avoiding it as though it were contrary.

Romans 14:5a ***For one person judges one day differently from another:***

That is, someone prefers to eat on alternate days. For there are some who have decided that meat should not be eaten on Wednesdays; there are those who abstain on Saturdays; and again there are those who eat from Easter until Pentecost.

Romans 14:5b ***But another judges every day.***

He judges every day who never eats.

Romans 14:5c ***Let each be fully convinced in his own mind:***

That is, let each be left to his own judgment.

Romans 14:6a ***Whoever observes the day, observes it for the Lord.***

This is true, because whoever always abstains thinks that he pleases God.

Romans 14:6b ***And whoever eats, eats for the Lord.***

He eats for the Lord because he gives thanks to the Creator. And whoever does not eat, does not eat for the Lord, and gives thanks to God. He gives thanks while acknowledging that the creature

belongs to God and was created good, but that he abstains from it, not condemning it.

Romans 14:7 ***For none of us lives for himself, and no one dies for himself.***

Someone would live for himself if he did not act under the Law; but whoever is governed by the bridle of the Law certainly does not live for himself, but for God who gave the Law, so that he may live according to His will. And whoever dies likewise dies for God, by whose judgment he will either be crowned or condemned.

Romans 14:8 ***For whether we live, we live to the Lord; whether we die, we die to the Lord.***

The meaning is the same. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. It is true that we all belong to the Lord as servants by condition and under the dominion of the Redeemer, and that each person is treated according to his merit.

Romans 14:9 ***For Christ died and rose again for this purpose, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.***

Through Christ the creature was made, which, having been alienated from its Creator through sin, was taken captive; God the Father, lest His work should perish, sent His Son from heaven to earth to teach it how, by what it did, it might escape the hands of pirates. For this reason He also allowed Himself to be killed by His enemies, so that, descending into Hades [*inferos*], because He had been killed innocent, He might condemn sin and release those whom it held in Hades [*inferos*]. Therefore, since He showed the

living the way of salvation and offered Himself for them, while He freed the dead from Hades [*inferno*], He is Lord of both the living and the dead; for from those who were lost He converted them again for Himself as servants.

Romans 14:10 ***But why do you judge your brother for not eating? Or why do you despise your brother for eating? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.***

Paul teaches that one ought not to judge in this matter, both because it is not contained in the Law and because we await God as judge.

Romans 14:11 ***For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow before me, and every tongue shall confess to God"*** (Isaiah 45:24).

This is written in Isaiah, because every tongue will confess to God in the faith of Christ. For since the one who was killed rose again and will be the judge, he rightly says: "*As I live, says the Lord*"; and not only do I live, but I will also judge, and my enemies will be struck with astonishment at me and will bend the knee, recognizing me as God from God.

Romans 14:12 ***So each of us will give an account of himself to God.***

For, Paul says, since we will each give an account for ourselves, let us not condemn one another in this matter written above.

Romans 14:13a ***Therefore, let us no longer judge one another;***

That is, knowing this, let us cease from discord.

Romans 14:13b ***Rather, judge this instead: that you do not place a stumbling block or cause of offense before your brother.***

He urges judgment in matters that are beneficial and can be defended by the authority of the law: let no offense be caused to any of the brothers, whether eating meat or not eating it.

Romans 14:14a ***I know and trust in the Lord that nothing is unclean through him.***

It reveals that, by the grace of the Savior, all things are clean; for, having rescued people from under the yoke of the Law and justified them, he restored the condition of their former freedom, so that they may rightly use the whole of creation, just as the holy people of old did. But those who are still under the Law are not permitted to use or eat what the Law forbids, because they despise the indulgence granted. For they are not unclean according to their nature, but become so when eaten contrary to the decree. Finally, in the Law he says: "They shall be unclean for you," etc. (Lev. 11:4).

Romans 14:14b ***And plainly, to one who considers something unclean, it is unclean.***

Whether someone who is a Christian from among the Jews, or a faithful Gentile, thinks that something of this kind must be avoided, he is the one whom he above calls weak; for he is weak

through doubt. To such a person, what he thinks should not be eaten is unclean; and since he does this not out of superstition but out of fear, he should be left to his own judgment.

Romans 14:15a ***For if your brother is distressed because of food, you are no longer walking according to love.***

In another epistle Paul says: "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach for food; but God will destroy both the one and the other" (1 Cor. 6:13). Since no one is either pleasing or displeasing to God because of food, he therefore urges us to pursue love, by which God has agreed to deliver us; for he says: "But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us" (Eph. 2:4). Therefore, whoever remembers this benefit cultivates love and places nothing before it; but he avoids those great things which he knows do not secure a promise with God.

Romans 14:15b ***Do not destroy by your food the one for whom Christ died.***

How precious the salvation of a brother is can be understood from Christ's death. Therefore, whoever knows its cost ought to strengthen him, not scandalize him, so as to make him doubtful over a trivial matter; and he may begin to hesitate whether meat should be eaten or not, though perhaps he had been eating it simply, secure in his conscience. But when controversies arise, he will begin, through his worry, to sin against God's creature, and it will become an insult to the Creator, leading to the destruction of the one who doubts.

Romans 14:16 ***Therefore, let not our good be blasphemed.***

That is, since the Lord's teaching is good and useful, it must not be blasphemed on account of something frivolous; but it is blasphemed when there is doubt concerning God's creature. Our good may also be understood to be blasphemed in this way: whoever has good works, if he is criticized for some other minor matter, obscures that good of his, and his good will begin to be blasphemed because of his evil, as it is written in Ezekiel: "The righteousness of the righteous shall not profit him, if he has erred" (Ezek. 33:12). It is like someone who, though otherwise handsome, has some defect on his forehead, or a flattened nose, whereby his appearance is disfigured. Therefore, he urges that those things be pursued which do not deprive one's other good qualities of approval.

Romans 14:17 ***For the kingdom of God is not food and drink.***

It is clear that no one pleases or displeases God on account of food. But it is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Paul says that those enter the kingdom of God who pursue righteousness, while possessing the Christian peace which the Lord gave, saying: "My peace I give you, my peace I leave you" (Jn. 14:27); from this arises joy in the Holy Spirit. Dispute, however, does not produce joy, but anger; therefore the Holy Spirit does not look upon it there, because He rejoices only in those who make peace. For just as He is saddened by us, so also He rejoices in us.

Romans 14:18 ***For whoever serves Christ in this is pleasing to God and approved by men.***

Since Christ redeemed us, therefore Paul says: *Whoever serves Christ in this*, as Redeemer, *is pleasing to God*. Why? Because he

himself sent Christ to redeem the human race, just as the Lord himself says: Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him (Jn. 5:23). Whoever, therefore, is pleasing to God is approved by men. How? For he has received a gift by which he may appear worthy of God.

Romans 14:19 ***Therefore, let us pursue the things that make for peace and preserve one another's edification.***

Since disputation produces discord, and so that we may be able to be peaceable, Paul teaches us to conceal our intention of eating or not eating. Moreover, he urges us to follow the way of edification, so that we may combine these things with peace, by which we may build one another up, avoiding those things that are unfruitful and more opposed. For discussion can be beneficial, since it stimulates the mind, provided that the desire to win is rejected; for this is what produces strife.

Romans 14:20a ***Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food.***

Man is the work of God by creation, and again the work of God while being reformed through regeneration. Food too is the work of God, but man is not for food; rather, food is for man: therefore there is a great difference. Therefore Paul says, "*Do not destroy this work of God*, which is excellent, *for the sake* of that which is most insignificant." This is to care for the salvation of one's brother, not to concern oneself with food so as to grieve one's brother. For he renders God's benefit ineffective who, through conflict, again provokes a brother freed from sin to sin, undoing in him the works of Christ, which He accomplished to free man from sin.

Romans 14:20b ***Indeed, all things are clean.***

It is true and evident that all things are clean, since in Genesis we read that everything God made was very good; but it is evil for the person who eats through causing offense (Gen. 1:31). Therefore, although by nature all things are good and clean, they become unclean to those who doubt; and it will be a stumbling block to the one who eats while doubting, with an unclean conscience, because he does what he considers useless for himself. Therefore no one should be contradicted regarding what Paul follows in this matter.

Romans 14:21a ***It is good not to eat meat and not to drink wine.***

When Paul was speaking only about meat, he added drink as well, so as to encourage those who abstain from these things by pointing out that it is permitted both to eat meat and to drink wine. So that they would not be saddened by those who use them, he gave them the comfort of relief, so that they might rest in their own choice and the dispute that causes disharmony might cease. For when they learn that it is clearly good to eat meat and drink wine, and conversely that it is good not to eat meat and not to drink wine, no one quarrels. For creation was given for the use of those who wish to use it; nevertheless, no necessity has been imposed on either the willing or the unwilling.

Romans 14:21b ***Nor should you do anything by which your brother is offended, scandalized, or weakened.***

Paul likewise says that the brother who has made up his mind to eat because of his weak conscience should not be subjected to

questioning, lest, being troubled, he take offense, not knowing what position to hold.

Romans 14:22a ***You have faith to yourself: have it before God.***

That is, you who sit secure, because God's creature is good; there is no need for you to judge another, since it is better that you have peace with your brother; for this is useful before God. In food there is benefit for the flesh, but in peace there is benefit for both flesh and soul; and therefore one must cease from such conflict, so that each person may remain in the purpose of his heart.

Romans 14:22b ***Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself in what he approves.***

He judges each person worthy of condemnation who does what he says he ought not to do; and he calls blessed the one who does nothing except what he proves useful for himself.

Romans 14:23a ***But whoever doubts is condemned if he eats.***

This is true, because whoever judges that it ought not to be eaten, and eats it, is condemned; for he condemns himself when he does what he declares to be useless for himself. Because it is not from faith. He certainly does not eat from faith who denies that it ought to be eaten, and yet eats.

Romans 14:23b ***But whatever is not from faith is sin.***

Paul rightly calls sin that which is done otherwise than it has been approved. Since the Romans had been brought up under the law, as I mentioned at the beginning of the epistle: when those who believed more correctly arrived, questions arose concerning eating meat and not eating it; and the party that said it should be eaten and not disapproved seemed better, because all things are very clean. He calls those weak who denied that it should be eaten, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, and leaves them to the purpose of their own heart. For it neither harms one not to eat, nor benefits one before God to eat; lest, being bound in any way by what they nevertheless ate with doubt, they should sin.

Chapter 15

Romans 15:1 ***We who are stronger ought to bear the infirmities of the weaker.***

Paul rightly says, "*We ought*"; for teachers must strengthen the weak and instruct the unlearned with gentleness, lest, provoked while striving to contend and appear not humble, they should advance toward worse things.

Romans 15:2a ***And not to please ourselves,***

That is, not to claim what benefits and pleases us, but also what benefits our brother; for we ought to care for one another.

Romans 15:2b ***Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.***

Now Paul has distinguished his own person; for he admonishes these people, as they strive for love, to please their neighbors for what is useful. This is edification, as he says elsewhere: “I please all people in all things” (1 Cor. 10:13).

Romans 15:3 ***For Christ also did not please himself, but, as it is written: “The accusations of those who accused you have fallen upon me.”***

Paul does not say that the Savior pleased himself, but God the Father; for he says: “For I have not come down from heaven to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me, the Father” (Jn. 6:38). And because, when he said these things, he was killed by the Jews who contradicted him as though he were a sinner, the Psalmist, speaking in his person, addresses these words to God the Father: “*The accusations of those who accused you have fallen upon me*” (Ps. 68:10); that is: While I was doing your will, they said that I was sinning against you; by not receiving me, whom you sent, they accused you. For when the Jews sinned against God by not receiving Christ, whom he sent, they even killed him as though he were sinning against God. Therefore the sins of those who sinned against God fell upon Christ; for the innocent is killed by sinners as a blasphemer, as it is written in the Gospel (Mark 15:28).

Romans 15:4 ***For whatever things were written were written for our confirmation, so that through the patience and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.***

It is clear that whatever things were written were written for our instruction, so that through this very encouragement we may advance toward hope, not distrusting the promises, even if they are still delayed.

Romans 15:5-6 ***Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to have the same understanding toward one another according to Jesus Christ, so that with one mind and one voice you may honor God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

The Apostle, sent as though for salvation, follows the people with a good wish, desiring that God grant them one understanding of wisdom according to Jesus Christ, so that they may think in accordance with Christ's teaching. Then they will be able to preserve love, following the example of the Lord who said: "No one has greater love than this, that he lay down his life for his friends and brothers" (Jn. 15:13); and therefore, with one voice and one confession, praise God the Father in Christ, if they encourage one another according to the mind of Christ, so that all may praise God without ceasing for everything he has done through Christ, and for having consented, after their fall through error, to raise them up and restore them again through the same one, granting a twofold benefit: mercy and knowledge.

Romans 15:7 ***Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted you, for the honor of God*** (Isa. 56:4).

Therefore, we have been accepted by Christ, when he took upon himself our weaknesses and bore our illnesses; so that, by this example, we may strengthen one another in our weaknesses through patience, lest the name of the honor of God assumed by us be rendered void; for we are called children of God through the grace of Christ.

Romans 15:8 ***For I say that Christ Jesus was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, in order to confirm the promises made to the Fathers.***

Paul praises the origin of the Jews; for in circumcision he signifies the sons of Abraham, to whom Christ, having been sent, ministered the grace promised to the Fathers. Therefore the Savior says: "For I am," he says, "in the midst of you" (Luke 22:27), not to be ministered to, but to minister; so that the truth in the promise made to the Fathers might be demonstrated. For circumcision of the flesh was given to Abraham as a figure of circumcision of the heart, which the prophet later signified as future, saying: "Circumcise the hardness of your hearts" (Jer. 4:4). Christ is the minister of this promised circumcision through his words, that is, its preacher. Then he said to the apostles, so that they might minister circumcision of the heart to those circumcised in the flesh: "As you sent me into this world, so I also sent them into this world" (Jn. 6:58). Circumcision of the heart, however, is to recognize God the Father as Creator, and his Son Christ, through whom he created all things, once the cloud of error has been removed, so that the truth of God might be fulfilled. For he had promised that he would grant mercy, and had promised it to the fathers of the Jews; for he had said to Abraham: "In your seed all nations shall be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). And to David he said: "I will set upon your throne one from the fruit of your womb" (Ps. 131:11), and: "A star shall rise from Jacob" (Num. 24:17).

Romans 15:9a ***But the Gentiles honor God because of mercy.***

Since no promise had been made to them, they were taken up to salvation, as unworthy, through mercy alone, so that by their confession they might honor God; for unbelievers dishonor him.

Romans 15:9b ***As it is written: "Therefore I will confess to you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."***

Paul proves this by prophetic example; for *it is written* in the seventeenth psalm that *the Gentiles* were to be admitted to the grace of God to receive salvation (Ps. 17:50). For this is the voice of Christ, who foretold that his preaching among the Gentiles would bear the fruit of confessing the mysetery of God; therefore the Son gives thanks to the Father for the obedience of the Gentiles. Therefore he says in the Gospel: "I will confess to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to little ones; for so it was well pleasing before you" (Matt. 11:25). This confession, therefore, is of the one God in the Trinity, from which joy arises; so that, after confessing the truth, he may joyfully sing of the mercy and gift of God.

Romans 15:10-11 ***And again he says: "Rejoice, nations, with his people,"*** in this song of Deuteronomy (Deut. 32:43). ***And again: "Praise the Lord, all nations, and magnify him, all peoples."*** (Ps. 116:1)

In the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm he shows that God had long ago decreed, through his mercy, to unite Jews and nations in harmony, so that the Gentiles, having obtained grace, would become companions of the Jews, who themselves had once been called his people by God's gift. But now the Jews are honorable; these others, formerly dishonorable, have been dignified through mercy, so that all may rejoice together in the knowledge of the truth; and while the nations praise God, all peoples may magnify him, the twelve tribes worshipping one God, who increased the number of his people by adding the nations. Finally, when the

Jews disputed with the apostle Peter concerning Cornelius, after he gave them his explanation, they agreed, magnifying the Lord and saying: “Perhaps God has also granted repentance to the Gentiles unto the attainment of life” (Acts 11:18).

Romans 15:12 ***And again Isaiah says: “There shall be a root of Jesse; and he who rises to rule the nations, in him the nations shall hope”*** (Isa. 11:10).

To give the nations greater confidence and an unquestionable hope, Paul confirms through many testimonies that it was God’s decree that all nations should be blessed in Christ; lest the disrespect of the unbelieving Jews should grieve them and make the souls of the believing nations doubtful, as though they were promising themselves hope in vain, since the faith of the Jews was credited to the God of Abraham, so that they might grow in joy and security. Why, however, is Christ from the root of Jesse, and not from the root of Boaz, the righteous man, or from the root of Obed? Because he is called the son of David on account of the kingdom; so that, just as he was born from God to be king, he would also have his origin in the flesh from David the king. Therefore the root of Jesse is the tree of David, which produced fruit through the branch that is Mary the Virgin, who bore Christ.

Romans 15:13-14 ***Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. I am convinced, my brothers, and I myself am convinced about you, that you too are full of love, filled with all knowledge, so that you are able to reprove one another.***

These are words of exhortation; for by praising them Paul urges them toward better understanding and life. For whoever sees

himself praised works diligently to make true the things that are said. Therefore he did not say that they should teach one another, but *reprove one another*; for one is usually reproved about something that, though known, sometimes slips from the mind. The rest is not obscure, so as to require explanation.

Romans 15:15-16 ***I have written to you rather boldly, brothers, in part, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God; to be a minister of Christ Jesus among the Gentiles, sanctifying the Gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable and sanctified in the Holy Spirit.***

For Paul does not imply that he wrote rashly, but, saying that authority was given to him through God's grace, he dares to write to all the Gentiles, reproving and confirming their purpose in Christ; so that he may show his concern in the ministry of the Gospel, as a teacher of the Gentiles, and that their sacrifice may become acceptable for the sake of sanctification in the Holy Spirit. For whatever is offered with complete faith and a sober mind is purified by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:17-19 ***Therefore I have glory in Christ before God; for I dare not speak of anything that Christ has not accomplished through me for the obedience of the Gentiles in word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, through the might of the Holy Spirit.***

Paul says that he has glory before God through Jesus Christ; for by believing and serving Christ Jesus with a pure conscience, he earned merit before God the Father, to such an extent that he says nothing is lacking that Christ did not accomplish through him for the call of the Gentiles, giving signs and wonders through his

hands, so that power would extol his preaching. Therefore he shows that he has glory in Christ before God; for by serving Christ he has glory before God, to such an extent that he cannot lack any divine power that has not been granted to him by God. Rather, he professes that, because he was found to be a worthy steward, he obtained everything that would advance the conversion of the Gentiles through the power of signs. This serves to prove that he was no less capable than the other apostles who had been with the Lord, and that God worked no lesser deeds of power among the Gentiles, so that by this very fact they might increase, seeing that they had attained the grace which the Jews had attained, who claim for themselves the privilege of the Fathers.

> **Romans 15:20** ***So that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the Gospel of God and of His Son, Christ. Therefore I have preached the Gospel, not where Christ had already been named, lest I should build upon another's foundation.***

Paul does not say without reason that he strives to preach there where Christ has not been named; for knowing that the false apostles were handing on Christ differently than they ought, for this was why they went about, so that under the name of Christ they might subject the people to other doctrines, which later was exceedingly difficult to correct, he therefore wished to forestall them, so that he might deliver to his hearers the words of an uncorrupted preaching, and so that the entire line of the arranged surface might have the foundation's strength intact. And since he was appointed teacher of the Gentiles, he ought diligently to ensure this: that he teach there where Christ had not been proclaimed, so as both to establish his authority and to obtain the full fruit of his labors from those whom he had planted. Therefore the Church occupied all places; for afterward heretics, plotting

with evil subtlety, endeavored under the name of Christ to corrupt the meaning of the Law and of the faith. This he warned by the testimony of the Law, saying:

> **Romans 15:21** ***But as it is written: "Those who have not been told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand";***

This is found in Isaiah (Isa. 62:15). Therefore, so that this understanding might be true and firm concerning the true Son of God, Paul says that he always hastened to fill the nations with evangelical truth:

> **Romans 15:22-24** ***Therefore I was greatly hindered from coming to you. But now, having no further place in these regions, and having had for many previous years a desire to come to you, when I begin my journey to Spain, I shall see you, and be escorted there by you, if I may first enjoy your company for a while.***

This is what Paul mentions at the beginning of the letter, saying: "Because I have often purposed to come to you, and have been hindered until now" (Rom. 1:13). Now he explains the reason why he was hindered: although wishing to come, he was engaged in another task that was pressing, namely, to refute the wicked arguments of the false apostles. Finally, after preaching throughout all the surrounding regions, he says that he is now free to come to Rome, which he had formerly desired. Therefore, because the Romans had been led into the Law, he corrects them meanwhile through this letter. But those who had not yet heard the preaching would be better instructed by his presence, so that, being founded in the true faith, they would be less likely to accept anything else. Nevertheless, he promised that he would come at

the time when he was going to Spain, because Christ had not been preached there, so that he might occupy their minds; and because it was difficult for the false apostles to travel to them, there was no harm if he went later.

Romans 15:25-26 ***But now I am setting out for Jerusalem to minister to the saints; for Macedonia and Achaia have decided to make some contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.***

Yet Paul says that he will first go to minister to the saints in Jerusalem, by which he wants the Romans to know that such works must be supported: for those who live by mercy and have been justified before God ought to serve this cause.

Romans 15:27 ***For they are their debtors; since if the Gentiles have become partakers of their spiritual things, they ought also to minister to them in material things.***

Indeed, Paul calls them *debtors* to the believing Jews, so that just as they *have become partakers of their spiritual things*, so they too may share in their bodily needs; that, rejoicing, the believing Jews may praise together the providence of God for their salvation through their ministry. For these, devoting themselves entirely to divine services and caring for nothing worldly, offered believers an example of good conduct. Finally, the Apostle wishes us to be so caring toward mercy that he calls us *debtors* to give alms and to practice good works with eagerness of heart: because whoever hopes for mercy from God ought to be merciful, thereby proving that he rightly hopes for it; for if a human being shows mercy, how much more God! For this is the recompense or reward: that those who receive mercy should show mercy. Therefore the Lord says:

"Blessed are the merciful" (Matt. 5:7); "for God will have mercy on them."

Romans 15:28-29 ***When I have completed this and delivered this fruit to them, I shall depart for Spain by way of you. For I know that, when I come to you, I shall come in the abundance of Christ's blessing.***

Confident, therefore, in God's arrangement and grace, Paul promised that he would come in the abundance of the blessing which he preaches of Christ. This blessing, however, is the power of signs, by which they have been confirmed.

Romans 15:30-31 ***I ask you therefore, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Holy Spirit, to share my concern in prayers to the Lord for me, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers who are in Judea.***

Then Paul prays that he may be helped by their prayers, so that he might escape the hands of the unbelieving Jews, not because he himself deserves it less, but he follows the order that the Church should pray for its leader. For many insignificant people, when they gather unanimously, become great; and it is impossible for the prayers of many not to obtain their request. If they too are eager to see the Apostle, let them pray more fervently, so that, once delivered, they may receive him with the joy of love.

Romans 15:32 ***And that the ministry of my gifts may be accepted by the saints in Jerusalem; that I may come to you with joy through the will of Jesus Christ, and be refreshed with you.***

Paul also says that this should be prayed for: that the ministry of his gifts may be accepted by the saints in Jerusalem, and that he may show himself to do all things according to the will of God; that, because his heart is devoted to bearing the gifts, he also wishes their attitude toward him to correspond to God's judgment; that, having understood his love toward them, they may with one accord give thanks to God with him. For it is a great gain for him when, made joyful by his ministry, they praise God.

Romans 15:33 May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

The God of peace is Christ, who says: "I give you my peace, I leave you peace" (Jn. 14:17), whom Paul desires to be with these, knowing that the Lord said: "Behold, I am with you all days until the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). Therefore he desires them to be such that the Lord Christ Jesus may be with them, who, having cut off all conflict arising from human error, gave and showed what is true, so that they may remain peaceful in that very truth.

Chapter 16

Romans 16:1-2 ***I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a minister of the Church at Cenchreae; that you receive her in the Lord worthily of the saints, and assist her in whatever matters she may need you; for she herself also has assisted many, and me.***

Paul commends *Phoebe*, who is coming, as a common sister, that is, according to the Law. To *commend* her suitably, he says that she *is a minister of the Church at Cenchreae*; and because she was a help to many, he says that she should rightly be helped on

account of her journey. But so that he might persuade them to receive her without delay and assist her in her need, if she arrived, he also testifies that she had assisted him; so that, the more distinguished her person is than that of others, the more he might show that the service owed to her should be rendered through love.

<u>Romans 16:3-5a</u> ***Greet Prisca and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, who laid down their necks for my life; to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the Churches of the Gentiles, and their household Church.***

These were Jews who, having become believers, became fellow laborers with the Apostle; they believed so rightly that they themselves also encouraged the others to the true faith. Finally, although Apollos was well versed in the Scriptures, he was nevertheless more carefully instructed by them in the way of the Lord: therefore he calls them his fellow laborers, but *in Christ Jesus*; for they were his fellow workers in the Gospel of God. Aquila is Prisca's husband, and it is clear that they did not come to Rome without purpose; for they were more devoted to the worship of God: indeed, for the strengthening of the Romans, all those whom he greets are understood to have been from among them. Therefore Paul says that not only he, but also all the Churches of the Gentiles, give them thanks, also referring to the Romans, so that they may obey those whom they hear laboring for the advancement *of the Gentiles*, to encourage them to faith in Christ. He praises them so highly that they did not refuse to suffer dangers for him; for they did not disdain to endure the hostility of both the Jews and false brethren, provided that they might assist the Apostle with their service and charity. The false brethren were those who believed in Christ, yet said that the Law had to be observed, thinking that Christ was not sufficient for the full effect of salvation; this the Apostle was destroying, and therefore he

suffered persecutions from them. He also greets their *household* members and servants, whom he calls a *Church*, because they were disciples of holy men in the faith.

Romans 16:5b ***Greet Epaenetus, beloved by me, who is the first fruits of Asia in Christ.***

Paul does not conceal Epaenetus's present dignity either, to show that men of rank also believe, and to invite the leading Romans to the faith, or certainly so that the humble might grow.

Romans 16:6 ***Greet Mary, who labored much among you.***

Paul reminds these by the name of Mary, whom we understand to have labored especially diligently for their encouragement, so that they may give her thanks.

Romans 16:7 ***Greet Andronicus and Julia, my kinsmen and fellow captives, who are distinguished among the apostles, who were in Christ before me.***

These kinsmen, both according to the flesh and according to the spirit, as the angel also said to Mary: "Behold, Elizabeth your kinswoman," etc. (Luke 1:36), whom Paul also declares to have served the earlier apostles with their testimony, and to have suffered captivity together with him for the sake of the faith; and therefore they are to be honored more fully.

Romans 16:8 ***Greet my beloved in Christ with an expanded greeting.***

Paul greets him as a friend, but a friend in the Lord; yet not one who shared in his labor or captivity.

Romans 16:9a ***Greet Urban, my helper in Christ.***

Paul calls him not only his own *helper*, but also a companion of the others in the exhortation to faith.

Romans 16:9b ***Also Stachys, my beloved.***

Although Paul calls this *Stachys beloved*, he nevertheless places him with Urban as a participant in the work of the Gospel.

Romans 16:10 ***Greet Appelles, approved in Christ.***

Paul greets this *Appelles* not as his friend or partner in work, but because he was tested by trials and found faithful *in Christ*.

Romans 16:11a ***Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.***

This *Aristobulus* is understood to have been a gatherer of the brethren in Christ; and Paul proves this by labeling those whom he gathered as worthy of his greeting.

Romans 16:11b ***Greet Herodion, our kinsman.***

By calling him only a *kinsman*, Paul shows him to be devoted to the love of rebirth; yet he did not indicate his watchfulness.

Romans 16:11c ***Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.***

This *Narcissus* is said to have been a presbyter at that time, as is read in other manuscripts. And because Paul was not present, you see why he greets as holy, *in the Lord*, those who were of his *household*. This presbyter Narcissus, however, performed the office of a traveler, strengthening believers with encouragements; and since the Apostle did not know the merits of those who had been with him, he said: *Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus in the Lord*; that is, greet in my name those whom you know to be worthy among them of my greeting, who have placed their hope in the Lord.

Romans 16:12a ***Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord.***

Paul declares these two worthy of equal honor in Christ.

Romans 16:12b ***Greet the beloved Persis, who labored greatly in the Lord.***

She appears to be placed before those mentioned above because she *labored greatly in the Lord*. This labor consists in encouragement, in ministry to the saints, and in distress and poverty for Christ's sake; for they were abandoning their homes when driven out, and were a reproach to the unbelievers.

Romans 16:13 ***Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.***

For this reason he placed that *Rufus* before *his mother* because of the election for the administration of God's grace, in which a

woman has no place; for he was *chosen*, that is, promoted by *the Lord* to carry out His affairs. Nevertheless, he regarded his mother as so holy that the Apostle also called her his own mother.

Romans 16:14 ***Greet Asyncletus, Phlegon, Herman, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them.***

Paul greets them together because he knew them to be united in Christ, that is, joined in Christian fellowship. He likewise greets *the brothers who were with them*, whose names he omitted.

Romans 16:15 ***Greet Philologus, and Julia, and Nereus, and his sister Olympias, and all the saints who are with them.***

All these are understood to have been united in mind, whom he greets together for this reason; their merit is recognized from those who were with them. For Paul calls them *saints*, so that he may rightly be seen to greet them.

Romans 16:16a ***Greet one another with a holy kiss.***

Paul commands all to whom he writes, and whom he names, to *greet one another with a holy kiss*, that is, in the peace of Christ, not in the desire of the flesh, but in the Holy Spirit; so that the kisses may be religious, not carnal.

Romans 16:16b ***All the Churches of Christ greet you.***

By this it is understood that there is also said to be a Church which is not of Christ. Therefore David calls the conspiracy of the

wicked the Church of the wicked (Ps. 25:5). Therefore Paul says that the *Churches* of all those places *greet* them, so that they may grow in faith. This, then, he referred to the preceding meaning, to show that Christ is he in whom salvation is, and that this is he whose people are faithful, and by whose will every creature lives. For Christ is the author of life, as the apostle Peter says (Acts 3:15), not the Law, in which some of them thought they ought to hope.

Romans 16:17-19a ***Now I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause dissensions and scandals contrary to the teaching you have learned; avoid them. For such people do not serve Christ our Lord Jesus, but their own appetites; and through enticing and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the innocent. For your obedience has been reported everywhere.***

Here Paul suddenly speaks of the persons of the false apostles, whom throughout the epistle he warned them to beware of, as he does now; but without revealing them, he restrained their tradition. For they compelled believers to Judaize, so that they might nullify God's benefit toward them, as I mentioned above; for, composing genealogical arguments, they adapted teachings to praise their tradition, by which they might deceive the hearts of the simple. "*For your obedience*," he says, "*has been reported everywhere*." This is what he says at the beginning of the epistle (Rom. 1:8): "because your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world." This means that he is confident of their obedience. For it was unbelievable that, after recognizing the truth, they would submit themselves to something foolish as though they were wise.

Romans 16:19b ***Therefore I rejoice in you.***

Here too the meaning is drawn from the preceding part of the epistle; for Paul rejoices because the Romans, who seem to possess dominion, have submitted themselves to the Christian faith.

Romans 16:19c ***I want you to advance, so that you may be learned in what is good, but inexperienced in what is evil.***

The *learned in good* here is one who does good works; the *inexperienced in evil* are those who are ignorant of evil deeds, that is, who do not know the practice of wickedness.

Romans 16:20a But the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet swiftly;

That is, shortly. Paul says this concerning his coming, because his coming would oppress the Devil on account of the fact that these people were going to receive spiritual grace; Satan envies this, because he wants people to remain in error; the rest differs, although they are of one profession.

Romans 16:20b ***The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.***

The grace which he promised them at his coming, he now desires to be with them; for if they deserve to receive it, it is already with them in hope.

Romans 16:21 ***Timothy, my fellow laborer, greets you, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my relatives.***

Timothy is his *fellow laborer*, as it were a co-bishop, who governed the Church with great concern and was exposed to the envy of the Jews to such an extent that, at the beginning, he was circumcised because of the Jews' scandal; since his mother was Jewish, he could not be a teacher while uncircumcised. Paul calls them *relatives* partly because of lineage and partly because of faith.

Romans 16:22 ***I, Tertius, greet you, who wrote this letter in the Lord.***

Tertius by name, not by number: he is the scribe of the letter, whom Paul allowed to greet the Roman people in his own name, to whom he writes, so that they may greet the others whom he names. For at that time there were still few leaders in the churches.

Romans 16:23 ***Caius, my host, greets you, and so do all the Churches.***

This is *Caius*, I believe, to whom the apostle John writes (3 John 1), rejoicing in his love, which he showed to the brethren by providing them with the expenses necessary. And whereas above he says: "All the Churches of Christ greet you"; now he repeats, saying: "*All the Churches greet you*," which I do not think was repeated without purpose; for so great and methodical a man placed nothing unnecessary. But because Paul says, "All the Churches of Christ greet you," that is, all the saints, as he says elsewhere: "Those who are Christ's have crucified their flesh" (Gal. 5:24); now he added that these also greet you, who are followers; so that he might signify the blessed people of the Churches, because in every Church there are two peoples. He may also have meant the Churches of two provinces, saying first "all

the Churches" of one place, then of another, or certainly those of the Jews and the Gentiles.

Romans 16:24 ***Erastus, steward of the city, and Quartus, a brother, greet you.***

The city steward is like a keeper who, guided by justice, governed the city, especially in regulating prices. Paul names all of these individually in the greeting to the Romans so that they might know the kind and number of those who rejoiced together with them in their good undertaking.

Romans 16:25-27 ***But to Him who is able to strengthen you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept in silence through eternal times, but is now revealed through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of the eternal God, for obedience to the faith among all nations, made known to the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.***

Let him give glory to God the Father, from whom all things are, so that He may consent to fulfill what was begun among the Romans, since He is powerful, by confirming their hearts in faith for the advancement of the Gospel and the revelation of the mystery hidden from the ages but revealed through Christ, or in Christ (Eph. 3:9). For the mystery that was always hidden in God was revealed in the time of Christ; because God is not solitary, since with Him from eternity is the Paraclete, in whose truth He decreed that every creature should be saved through knowledge. The truth of this mystery had indeed been indicated by the prophets through certain figures, known only to the wise God,

whose grace He willed the nations to share, though it had been hidden from humankind. He alone, therefore, is wise, because all wisdom is from Him, as Solomon says: “All wisdom is from the Lord God, and it has always been with Him” (Eccles. 1:1). This Wisdom is Christ, because it is from Him and was always with Him, through whom be glory to Him forever and ever. Amen. Therefore nothing is complete without Christ, because all things are through Him; when He is acknowledged, praise is given to God the Father through Him, because He is understood through Christ, as through His Wisdom, in whom He saved believers. Glory, therefore, to the Father through the Son, that is, glory to both in the Holy Spirit, because both are in one glory.

Romans 16:28 ***May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.***

In conclusion, Paul places Christ, through whom we were made and by whose grace we were again reformed, so that he may remain fixed in our minds; for if we are mindful of his benefits, he will always protect us, as he said: “And behold,” he says (Matt. 28:20), “I am with you all days, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Commentary Romans 9:5

For when no mention is made of the Father's name, and the discourse concerns Christ, it cannot be otherwise than that he is called *God*. Frequently, indeed, Scripture, because of its confession of one God, when it speaks of God the Father and joins the Son to God, calls the Father God and the Son Lord. But if anyone does not think that this was said of Christ: Who is God, let him identify the person of whom it was said: for no mention of God the Father has been made in this passage. But what wonder if in this passage he openly spoke of Christ as God over all, of whom elsewhere in the epistle Paul confirmed this meaning in such words, saying: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth (Phil. 2:10)? These are all things over which Christ is God. For there are no others, apart from these, so that Christ is not God over all; nor can every creature bow the knee except to God.

Questions (very close!)

But what wonder is it, when among other things he says to the Romans, "Theirs are the fathers, and from them, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever" (Rom. 9:5)? What does "from them, according to the flesh, is the Christ" mean? He would not have said this if He were not also according to God; so that, according to the flesh, He is from the fathers, but according to His divinity Christ is from God, God over all. But perhaps it might be said that this relates to the person of the Father? Yet in this passage there is no mention of the name of the Father. Therefore, if it is denied that this is said of Christ, let a person be given to whom it fittingly applies. And why should it not fit Christ, in whose name every knee bows in heaven and on earth and under the earth (Philip. 2:10)? that is, that He is God over all. For besides these there are no others. [1ST CATEGORY NT QUESTION 91.]

Commentary Romans 9:16

For when Saul sinned and asked forgiveness, he did not receive it (1 Kings 15:24); whereas David, having sinned and asked to be forgiven, obtained pardon (2 Sam. 12:8).

Questions (very close!)

Why is it that Saul, when he sinned, asked that prayer be made for him so that he might be forgiven and could not obtain it, while David, when he sinned, asked and obtained pardon? [1ST CATEGORY OT QUESTION 18.]

Commentary Romans 4:3

It has shown that Abraham does not have glory before God because he was circumcised or because he kept himself from iniquity, but because he believed God; therefore he was justified and will obtain the reward of his praise in the future.

Questions

Nor was Abraham himself justified after he was circumcised: “Abraham,” it says, “believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” (Heb. 11:5, 7, 8; Rom. 4:3). Then he was circumcised, so that there might be in him a sign that, though he was old, he believed that he would have a son. Therefore it is not circumcision that commends Abraham, but faith. And so, for those who believe, faith is sufficient for justification, that they may be sons of Abraham in faith, not in

circumcision, because they have no need of circumcision. [1ST CATEGORY OT QUESTION 44.]

Commentary Romans 4:13

For where there is no law, there is no transgression. Paul says this because, once the guilty are removed from the power of the law and pardon is given, there is no transgression; for those who through transgression of the law had been sinners are justified. For the law of deeds ceases, that is, the observance of Sabbaths, new moons, circumcision, distinction of foods, observance concerning a dead animal, or the blood of a weasel.

Questions

Now, because by a common name this Law which I called natural, and that which is called the Law of works, are both termed "law," the Apostle appears to speak against the Law. But lest he seem to empty this Law, without which this life cannot be governed, he says, "We know that the Law is spiritual," so that the Law which he annuls might be understood to be the Law of sabbath observance, circumcision, foods, and new moons. For that Law is therefore not called spiritual, because it punishes all sins. [2ND CATEGORY NT QUESTION 46.]

Commentary Romans 1:3

He, who was the Son of God according to the Holy Spirit, that is, according to God (for God is spirit, and is without doubt holy), says that

he was made according to the flesh the Son of God from the seed of David, according to that: “And the Word was made flesh” (Jn. 1:14); so that Christ Jesus may now be one Son of God and of man, so that just as he is true God, he might also be true man; but he will not be true unless he is of flesh and soul, so that he may be perfect. For he, who from eternity was the Son of God, was unknown to the creature; but when he willed to be revealed for human salvation, he had to become visible and corporeal; because he also willed to be known by his power, and to cleanse man from sins in the flesh, with death overcome. And therefore he is made from the seed of David, so that just as he was born as king from God before the ages, so also according to the flesh he might receive royal origin from a king, made by the work of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin, that is, born; so that, with reverence reserved for him, he might from this be known as more than man; because he differed from the nativity under human law, just as it had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb” (Isa. 7:14), so that when what was new should appear and worthy of praise, a certain providence of God concerning the visitation of the human race to come might be recognized.

Questions

AS WE CONFESS THAT THE SAVIOR WAS BORN, WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT THE APOSTLE SAYS HE WAS MADE FROM THE SEED OF DAVID (Rom. 1:3), SINCE TO BE MADE IS ONE THING AND TO BE BORN ANOTHER? — Although in this place “making” can be understood as “birth”: for “making” does indeed differ from “generation,” but only in other contexts, not where the matter concerns flesh and body. Yet the Apostle did not use such words without reason; for in another place he says, “made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). Therefore he meant something by this expression. For the flesh of the Lord in the Virgin’s womb was not formed and the body brought into being by human seed, but by the operation and power of the Holy Spirit; that is why the Apostle spoke in this way. It is one thing to thicken blood with mingled seed and therefore to generate, and another to bring forth, not by mixture, but by power. Therefore he said “*made*” rather than “begotten.” [2ND CATEGORY NT QUESTION 44.]

Commentary Romans 8:7

Paul did not say the flesh is hostile, but *the wisdom of the flesh*; that is, not the substance, but either evil actions, or thought, or assertion that is born of error. Therefore, the wisdom of the flesh is, in the first place, the speculation about the stars discovered by men, and then the delight in visible things. These are *hostile to God*, because they make the Lord of the elements and the maker of the world equal to the things He has made, asserting that nothing can be done beyond what the order of the world contains. Therefore they deny that God made it so that a Virgin gave birth, or that the bodies of the dead should rise again; because, they say, it is foolish that God should do anything beyond what man understands. O you wise of the world, who think that God ought not to act otherwise than does the creature made by Him, so that He Himself may be thought similar to the creatures! Therefore they are blinded, so that they do not see what an insult they offer to God. For the work which He agreed to do for the proclamation of His own praise, these men, disapproving it, declare to be unbelievable and foolish: and therefore this wisdom of the flesh cannot be *subject to the law of God*; for they sharpen their zeal to this end, that they may oppose the deeds of God.

Questions

For by saying “flesh” it has been made clear what is signified; from this it can easily be recognized what its wisdom is. We have said, then, that all the elements are called flesh, that is, the substances of visible things: whose way of thinking is such that they believe nothing can come about without a spiritual and simple mingling, while they shrink from the notion of power and judge it foolish. For those who, distrusting spiritual things, follow carnal ones, understand and consider as true nothing other than what is contained in the order of the elements: so that they neither admit that a virgin gave birth, nor believe in the resurrection of the flesh,

because the reasoning of the flesh, that is, of the elements, does not accept this. For all things that are generated in time are produced by an operative mingling: and they say that dead and dissolved bodies cannot be restored again to life, because each element, by a separated mingling, returns to its own nature. Swollen with such notions, they deny that what we believe will happen or has happened: and therefore their assertion is hostile to God, since it considers as foolish and empty that which God has done and promised He will do. [2ND CATEGORY NT QUESTION 47.]

Commentary Romans 11:29

For the gifts and calling of God are binding. It is true, because God's grace in baptism does not seek groaning, or weeping, or any work, but only a profession from the heart. Nor, because they had grievously sinned by not accepting God's promise, and because grave sins get forgiveness only through weeping and groaning, did he show that they could no longer receive mercy because he did not see them grieving; he shows that this is not required at the beginning of faith, for God's gift freely forgives sins in baptism.

Questions

Accordingly, to those who turn to Him in faith He grants all sins together, without any preceding cry of penance. Therefore the Apostle Paul says: "For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29). Afterwards, however, if they sin, they can deserve pardon through penance; so that, because they have sinned after receiving free mercy, they may no longer obtain it freely, but may reach forgiveness with intervening groans and tears. For it is impossible for a man not to sin. Therefore the Apostle John says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all

unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:8). [1ST CATEGORY NT QUESTION 102. AGAINST NOVATIAN.]

Commentary Romans 8:27

But he who searches the hearts knows what the Spirit desires, because he intercedes for the saints according to God's will. It is clear that to God, to whom nothing is silent or hidden, the prayer of all spirits is known; how much more that of the Holy Spirit, who is certainly of the same substance, and speaks not by the impulse of air, nor like the angels, nor like the other creatures, but as befits his divinity! Therefore he speaks to God when he seems silent to us; for he also sees when he is not seen, and asks for those things which he knows please God and benefit us. Indeed, that same Spirit intercedes for us when he knows that through ignorance, not presumption, we ask for things contrary to our good.

Questions

For the deep mysteries of God are God's inner realities, which cannot be searched by a creature. For it is also written that he intercedes for the saints according to God's will, which the saints of course do not know, as the Apostle says: For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought (Rom. 8:27, 26). Therefore to know the deep things of God and not to be ignorant of the will of God signify one and the same thing. For what mystery is so deep as the will of God, which is known to the Holy Spirit, but is unknown to all others? We must also consider how it is said that no one knows what is in a man, except the spirit of the man which is in him (1 Cor. 2:11): by "spirit" he meant the soul; because no one knows what is in the soul of a man, except his soul, which is spirit. So also in God no one knows the things that are God's, except the Spirit of God, that is, God himself. For one who is "of God" is understood to be nothing other than God. Therefore the Spirit of God knows what is in God, because he is of God. For if no one knows the thoughts of men except God, how much more can no one know God's secrets and will

unless he be of God, that is, the very same God? For he is known only to himself.

Commentary Romans 5:12

Now death is the termination of the body, when the soul is separated from the body. There is also another death, which is called the second, in Gehenna, which we do not suffer by Adam's sin, but, on the occasion of it, is acquired by our own sins: from this the good are free, only that they were in hell [*inferno*], but in the upper part, as if in a place of liberty, since they could not ascend to heaven;

Questions

For cleansed from sins by faith, and alienated from the second death (which, by the judgment pronounced on Adam, kept men in the hell [*inferos*]), held by none, he goes into the paradise of God the Father. [1ST CATEGORY OT QUESTION 47.]